

The Most Reverend Metropolitan (Emeritus) YURIJ
212-800 Burrows Avenue,
Winnipeg, Manitoba. R2X 3A9

His Eminence Ilarion
Archbishop of Winnipeg & the Central Eparchy
Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
c/o 11404-112 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5G 0H6

14 October 2022

Your Eminence!
Beloved Brother in Christ!

Слава Ісусу Христу!

I wish to express my warmest greetings, dear Vladyko, on this Great Feast of the Protection of Most Holy Theotokos! As you and I know well, this feast is especially beloved and celebrated by our God-loving Ukrainian people and, in 2022, it has a particularly poignant dimension, as our courageous brothers and sisters in Ukraine – especially those in the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – bravely protect and defend the lands of our ancestors and her citizens from the brutal and devilish attack on the part of the Russian Federation. May the Most Holy Theotokos extend Her Protecting Veil over all Her Ukrainian children in these horrible and perilous times!

I write to you today, Your Eminence, realizing that the time of Eparchial Assemblies of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada are soon upon the faithful of our Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada. Considering these will be the first assemblies following the XXIV Sobor, held this summer, and discussion of the decisions of the Sobor is likely to form part of the assembly agendas, I felt it important to clarify a few issues that involve me, personally, regarding things I did *or did not* say, leading up to the XXIV Sobor, especially as they relate to the group of faithful of our Church who gathered before the Sobor and continue to gather to discuss various aspects of church life (who refer to themselves as the “UOCC National Sobornist Network”). Although I have clarified these things previously, especially during meetings of the Consistory Board, leading up to my retirement in July of 2021, it seems some ambiguity and/or misunderstanding continues to exist regarding my assessment of, or position on, these issues. I wish to clarify those at this time:

- 1) *“Metropolitan Yurij blessed the formation of the ‘UOCC National Sobornist Network’.”* This is quite inaccurate. I never blessed this or any other particular group of faithful to form into a movement, now possessing all the attributes of a sanctioned organization of our Church (scheduled meetings, use of email lists from our parishes, a web page, etc.). As you know, according to our bylaws, the formation of a new church organization or brotherhood would require a Consistory resolution as well as the agreement and blessing of the Metropolitan in order to have a canonical status, which this group does not have. I did have discussions *with a few individuals who approached me*, shortly after I formally announced my intent to retire, where I stated, that the Church was free to discuss any concerns about the governance of our Church and about my successor to the Metropolitan’s throne. My main concern in this regard, throughout the last years, was and continues to be, that the Council of Bishops and the Consistory have the necessary finances (budget) and human

resources to do what a Church does. It would seem, that our Church, in general does not want to deal with this reality. As Your Eminence can attest, I maintained the principle, that “anyone can speak with anyone about anything”, in preparation for the upcoming Sobor. This included any group of individuals, parishes, even people who talk to themselves. I repeated this principle numerous times at meetings of the Consistory Board. My response to these individuals was simply a reiteration of this same principle and nothing more. Your Eminence will also recall that I expressed, at the last meeting of the Consistory Board under my Presidency, concern about this group operating with presumed authority far beyond the parameters of what is foreseen as acceptable in our Church. Again, our bylaws are quite clear how faithful who wish to organize into formal organizations or groups within the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada are to proceed in acquiring approval and blessing for such formations. As it relates to this “network,” this never happened.

- 2) *“Metropolitan Yurij blessed the ‘Governance Committee’ and ‘Metropolitan Succession Committee’ resolutions to be presented to the Consistory Board.”* Once again, this is highly inaccurate. The same individuals, connected to what eventually (after my retirement) became the self-declared “UOCC National Sobornist Network,” *approached me* with initial drafts (of what eventually were formed into resolutions by the Consistory Board) *they, themselves, drafted* for review for any canonical impediments to moving them forward for consideration by the Consistory Board. In response, I offered my observations and comments, not all of which were incorporated into what later would become the final public draft, retaining, in my opinion, inaccuracies. *At no time, however, did I make any statement regarding any blessing to have them presented to the Consistory Board.* Any statement claiming I “blessed these resolutions” is simply not true. I could not bless resolutions intended for ratification by a Sobor of our Church.

Your Eminence, beloved Vladyka Ilarion! I do not write to you with intent to judge or condemn anyone’s actions; I repeat – everyone has a right to express an opinion, but not misuse the authority of the Primate of the UOCC. My intent is to simply bring clarity to any misinterpretation or misunderstanding of my interactions with a small group of faithful individuals of our Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada. I am concerned, in particular, that my name has even been entered in the text of the XXIV Sobor Resolution F8 (in its recitals): *“AND WHEREAS Metropolitan Yurij blessed the gatherings of the participants in UNSN for the purpose of discussing ideas, concerns and issues regarding the Church;...”* Following my explanations, above, I hope Your Eminence will see fit to have this inaccurate statement edited out of this resolution before the presentation of the XXIV Sobor Minutes for final adoption at the XXV Sobor in 2025.

I hope the above will resolve any misunderstanding resulting from misinterpretation of things I did or did not state. Once again, I greet you, beloved in Christ, Metropolitan Ilarion, with the Great Feast of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos! I entreat your constant prayers for me. Be assured of my prayers for Your Eminence and my support for you as you ably navigate the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, as Primate of our beloved and Holy Church, through the stormy times in which we now live!

With fraternal love,
in Christ, the Lord,

+ *Yurij, Metropolitan Emeritus*

+Yurij, Metropolitan Emeritus