

# **A Christian European State: Religion in Modern Ukraine**

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## **Introduction**

Over the last year and a bit the Ukrainian people have suffered greatly, not for the first time in the past century. Part of their state has been forcibly annexed. Some of the Donbas – the eastern coal and steel region - has fallen prey to separatist criminals, sponsored, armed and supported by Russia. The Ukrainian currency has lost 80% of its value, a steeper drop than any other currency, inflation has risen and the economy contracted by 5% last year. This is a man-made disaster. Over 6000 people have lost their lives. Many more have been injured. Some one and a half million have had to flee their homes.

These numbers hide individual faces and names. A few examples:

- Last September in L'viv (Western Ukraine) I met the young widow of a Donetsk social activist, with her teenage daughter. In April, at the start of the uprising, he had been abducted by separatists and killed. Their house had been destroyed. The widow and her daughter were now being cared for in Kyiv.
- In Crimea the Tatar community is again under threat, having returned to their homeland only in the late 1980s following their expulsion to Central Asia by Stalin. Some of their leaders have been barred from Crimea. Some Tatars have been abducted and killed. Their media outlets have been closed. Thousands of them have left for mainland Ukraine; I met some of them in L'viv in September at a festival of Crimean Tatar culture. Other communities in Crimea – Orthodox parishes of the Kyiv Patriarchate, Catholic and Jewish – have also faced menace and obstruction.
- In the territory controlled by the separatists in Eastern Ukraine, three Catholic priests were kidnapped; the residence of the Greek Catholic Bishop in Donetsk was robbed and sealed; the Bishop and almost all his priests were forced to leave the Donetsk area; on 16 August the convent of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate in Donetsk was seized by separatists while the sisters were away on summer retreat and children's camps; the sisters cannot return to their home.

Let me introduce myself and explain what I will talk about today.

I was a British diplomat for 34 years until 2011. I served in Moscow in both Brezhnev's Soviet Union and Yel'tsin's Russia, and as Ambassador to Ukraine from 2002 to 2006, where I witnessed the Orange Revolution. These days I speak only for myself.

While Ambassador I got to know the Ukrainian Catholic University in L'viv. I was struck by its witness to the twentieth-century martyrs of the underground Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, from 1945 to 1989 the largest banned religious organisation in the world. The little museum there included items like a suitcase with a false bottom, portable vestments and tiny vessels for saying Mass in the Gulag. I realised that I had seen things like that before, in the museum at Stonyhurst, the Jesuit college in Lancashire, which had been preserved from the repression of Catholics in England in the sixteenth century.

Two years ago I was invited to join the Senate (board of management) of the Ukrainian Catholic University. It is the only Catholic university in the former Soviet Union. I am proud to be associated with this institution, which is built on Christian values, dynamic and not corrupt (unlike much of Ukraine's state higher education sector).

Today I will set Ukraine in context for you: sketching in broad brush strokes its geography and history, and what makes Ukraine different from Russia. Then I will consider in more detail the religious situation, focusing on the various Christian denominations, Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic, and the prospects for church unity in Ukraine. In describing the religious situation, I have drawn on information in the special summer 2014 Ukraine issue of *East-West Church and Ministry Report*, as well as other sources and my own experience.

### **Ukraine: the context**

Ukraine has a crucial location between Russia and Central Europe, or – to put it another way – between Eurasia and the European Union. It lies across the Black Sea from Turkey. It has the largest territory of any state in Europe, after the European part of Russia; it is larger than France. The land is famously fertile, with rich deposits of black earth, which have made it the breadbasket of Europe since the days of Herodotus. In future, as the global population grows, Ukraine will be one of the world's major sources of food. The land is also rich in minerals: coal, oil, gas, iron ore and so on. It has well developed industries in iron, steel, engineering, aviation, shipbuilding, chemicals and software, to name but a few. Ukrainians are well educated, but the population is shrinking and now stands at about 46 million. There are chronic health issues, related to lack of resources and excessive alcohol and tobacco consumption.

In my experience of travelling throughout Ukraine, most of its people speak both Ukrainian and Russian, except in Crimea, where over 60% are ethnic Russians who mostly do not speak Ukrainian. In broad terms – leaving aside the 5% of the population who belong to other minorities – roughly four out of six people in Ukraine are ethnic Ukrainian and speak Ukrainian as their first language; another one in six is ethnic Ukrainian but speaks Russian as first language; the final sixth is ethnic Russian and speaks Russian first. This is a complex picture, which is hard for us, mostly monoglot, Brits to get our heads around. It is far more complex than the picture painted by Russian media of Ukraine divided between Russophone/Russophile East and Ukrainian-speaking/pro-Western West. Former President Leonid Kuchma, not renowned as a pro-Western moderniser, launched his book at the Moscow book fair in 2004 with the title *Ukraine is not Russia*. President Putin's repeated assertions that Russians and Ukrainians are one people, or that Ukraine is part of the 'Russian world', represent only a Russian view. It looks very different from Ukraine.

My Scottish wife has helped me to see an analogy between Scotland and England, and Ukraine and Russia. Their people are close and interrelated. But the Scots and the Ukrainians know they are different from their bigger neighbours, while the English and the Russians often assume they are not. There is a long history of patronising Russian attitudes to Ukraine, of the belief that *Malorossiya* ('Little Russia') is just Russia's backward younger brother. Any of you with siblings will understand the difference of view between big brothers and little brothers!

There were deliberate efforts to suppress Ukrainian identity under both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. In the nineteenth century a Russian Interior Minister said 'there never has been, is, nor will be a Ukrainian language'. This was his wish, rather than a statement of fact. Both languages are Eastern Slav, but significantly different, as I discovered when I learned Ukrainian, already knowing Russian. Much everyday Ukrainian is closer to Polish than to Russian. It is not a dialect of Russian.

Ukraine is crucial to Russia's view of its history and place in the world. Many Russians think of Moscow as the heart, St Petersburg as the head and Kyiv (Kiev) as the soul of Russia. This reflects the fact that Prince Volodymyr (Vladimir) introduced Christianity to the Slavic lands in

Kyiv in 988. But that was over 150 years before Moscow was founded, in 1147. So without Ukraine, Russia loses the first part of its history, as well as any hope of rebuilding an empire.

Political attitudes and values do differ between Western and Central Ukraine on the one hand, and Eastern and Southern Ukraine on the other. This showed up clearly in electoral results, until last year, when there was a more uniform picture across most of the country. There is now a new way of looking at this. Two years of research by the Nestor Group in Kyiv before the Maidan revolution concluded that in terms of values most of Ukraine actually resembles *Southern* Europe, with strong horizontal networks and less regard for governments, which are seen to come and go like the weather. The Donbas and Crimea, however, are *Eastern* European, like Russia, with respect for strong vertical power. The city of L'viv is an outlier. It has been on the territory of four states over the last hundred years, and in values is more like *Central* Europe.

These differences of attitudes and values, which are not unique to Ukraine (think of the UK's North-South divide), can largely be explained by different histories:

- Some Eastern regions were part of Russia for 350 years.
- In the late eighteenth century Russia under Catherine the Great (not regarded as 'Great' in Ukraine) conquered the northern Black Sea coast, calling it *Novorossiia* (New Russia) - a term which Putin revived last year - and Crimea. So much for Russian claims that Crimea was 'always Russian'!
- Around that time Russia also annexed more territory when Poland was partitioned, and what is now Western Ukraine became part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.
- After the First World War and the Russo-Polish war (and a short-lived Ukrainian Republic in 1917-1918), Ukraine was divided between the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania.
- In 1932 and 1933, in a brutal campaign to collectivise agriculture and eliminate wealthier peasants, Stalin orchestrated the terror famine (*'Holodomor'*). Millions of Ukrainians in Eastern and Central Ukraine died, as well as peasants in Southern Russia. For 60 years the Soviet regime tried to ignore the famine and airbrush it from history. But Ukrainian families did not forget. Thanks to President Viktor Yushchenko there is now a museum in Kyiv which movingly commemorates the *Holodomor*.
- In 1939, after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Stalin annexed Western Ukraine. The brutality ensured that some Western Ukrainians regarded the invasion by Nazi Germany in 1941 as liberation. By 1944 the Nazis were driven out and Western Ukraine was again under Soviet control. But armed resistance to Soviet rule continued until the 1950s. Soviet propaganda tarred the Ukrainian nationalists led by Stepan Bandera as 'fascists', 'terrorists' and '*Banderovtsy*', terms of abuse revived in last year's vicious Russian information war against Ukraine.
- Khrushchev transferred Crimea from Russia to Ukraine in 1954, the 300th anniversary of the 'union' of Russia and Ukraine. At the time this was a mere redrawing of administrative boundaries within the USSR, which became significant and controversial only with the disintegration of the USSR and Ukraine's independence.
- Despite their different histories and attitudes, Ukrainians have been united in their support for independence. 92% voted for independence in 1991, with majorities in every

region, including Crimea. Subsequent opinion polls indicated continuing majority support for independence, across the whole country. Talk of separation, in 2004 and in last year's actions in Donets'k and Luhans'k regions, never enjoyed majority popular support.

- Partly as a result of these diverse histories, Ukraine is more plural and less centralised than Russia. The 'vertical of power' is much weaker in Ukraine, while the horizontal ties of civil society are stronger. This can be seen in politics, business, the media and religion, to which I now turn.

## **The religious situation in Ukraine**

The Soviet Union was officially, and aggressively, atheist. Thousands of churches were destroyed, and thousands of religious people went to the camps, or lost their lives. There was some reprieve after 1941, particularly for the Russian Orthodox Church, to help rally the people against Nazi aggression. Repression returned after the War, and was eased only when Gorbachev allowed greater religious freedom in the late 1980s.

With the end of the Soviet Union came a renaissance of religious practice, the building and restoration of churches. But already in the 1990s Russia adopted a law which gave a privileged status to four 'traditional' faiths: Orthodoxy (alone among Christian denominations), Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. The Russian Orthodox Church's defensive stance towards Catholic and Protestant churches was confirmed.

Ukraine is one of the most church-minded countries in Europe. There are some 34,000 congregations for a population of 46 million. Ukraine has a great diversity of Christian confessions: three different Orthodox patriarchates, Greek Catholics and Roman Catholics, and many different Protestant churches. In terms of numbers, there are some 19,000 Orthodox congregations, nearly 9,500 Protestant congregations and over 5,000 Catholic congregations. The Orthodox and Protestants are spread across the country, although the East and South are proportionately less 'churched'. There are Protestant 'mega-churches' with thousands of members in both Eastern and Western Ukraine. The Catholics are concentrated in the West and Centre, with about four Greek Catholic parishes for every Roman Catholic one.

Another – rough and ready - way of looking at this is opinion polling. According to one poll, some 38% of Ukrainians said they were religious. Of those, around 40% belonged to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate), 30% to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) and 14% to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. In another poll in May 2014, 70% of Ukrainians considered themselves Orthodox faithful, of which 32% belonged to the Kyiv Patriarchate (up from 26% a year before) and 25% to the Moscow Patriarchate (down from 28%). So although the Moscow Patriarchate claims more congregations than the Kyiv Patriarchate (12,895 to 4,702), they may well have fewer parishioners. Measurement is not straightforward.

Religious tolerance and freedom of conscience are much more in evidence in Ukraine than in Russia. In Russia the Orthodox Church is so revered as a cultural unifying force that in public surveys even non-believers identify themselves as Orthodox. The state gives Orthodoxy a privileged position as a 'traditional' religion, and the Orthodox hierarchs in their turn act in symphony with the state, giving it political support. This has been evident in Russia's conflict with Ukraine, where the Russian Orthodox Church has made repeated statements in support of Russian state policy.

Since 1996 the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches has united 18 major confessions and unions, including the Orthodox Churches of the Moscow and Kyiv Patriarchates, Greek Catholics, Baptists, Pentecostals and even Muslims. In the 2013-2014 crisis the Council called upon all parties to seek a peaceful resolution of differences, not acting on behalf of any party. But after the loss of Crimea, the Council supported the territorial integrity of Ukraine and spoke against Russia's aggression in Crimea. Metropolitan Antoni (Pakanych) of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate), the head of the Council, signed these statements.

### ***Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)***

Although given a degree of autonomy by Russian Orthodox Patriarch Aleksii II in 1990, this Church is subordinate to the Moscow Patriarchate. It is not hard to see why Moscow does not want to lose its Ukrainian branch, which accounts for about a third of its overall parishes and much of its wealth. Ukraine has the second largest number of Orthodox worshippers in the world.

The Russian government and the Russian Orthodox Church have long regarded the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (UOC (MP)) as an instrument in their campaign to reunite the Eastern Slavs, in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus'. This was evident during the 2013 ceremonies in Kyiv, attended by Putin and the Patriarch, to mark the 1025<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of Christianity. But now the UOC (MP) is torn between loyalty to Moscow and serving its parishioners in Ukraine. The Moscow Patriarchate should be worrying that its Ukrainian affiliate could become less an instrument to promote Moscow's strategy and more a source of dissidence within the Russian Orthodox Church, much as Ukraine proved to be a source of dissidence within the Soviet Union.

During the Maidan protests some Moscow Patriarchate priests stood between protestors and police, trying to prevent bloodshed. The internal affairs of the church were stabilised by the fact that its leadership changed almost at the same time as the government of the country. Because of the illness of Metropolitan Vladimir (Sabodan), Metropolitan Onufri (Berezovsky) was elected acting head of the UOC (MP) on 24 February 2014. In the early 1990s Metropolitan Onufri had opposed those Ukrainian hierarchs who had favoured severing ties with the Russian Orthodox Church. In 2009 he was a long-shot candidate to become Patriarch of Moscow. Now, in 2014, he took a balanced position, not calling for pro-Maidan actions, but condemning Russia's efforts to split Ukraine in letters to Putin and Patriarch Kirill. Most bishops of his church supported him. The head of the church's Information Service, Archpriest Georgii Kovalenko, played a conciliatory role, explaining the church's Christian position and asking the Russian mass media not to address all Ukrainians as fascists and Nazis. Active pro-Russian supporters of Yanukovich in the church lost out, such as the head of the Kyiv-Pechers'k Lavra Metropolitan Pavel (Lebed'), who had compared Yanukovich to Christ and the opposition He faced. On the other wing, Metropolitan Sofroni (Dmitruk) of Cherkassy declared that Putin was a bandit and that Russian politicians with Ukrainian ancestry were aggressors and traitors. Bishop Filaret (Kucherov) of L'viv on 3 March 2014 appealed to Putin not to start a fratricidal war and to take Russian troops away from Ukrainian territory. (This was before Russia admitted that its troops had been involved in the annexation of Crimea, although that was already obvious to Ukrainians.) Metropolitan Aleksandr (Drabinko) of Pereyaslav-Khmel'nyts'kyi on 2 March 2014 condemned Yanukovich and with a group of parishioners wrote to Patriarch Kirill explaining the role of the UOC (MP) in revolutionary Ukraine:

*Our bishops are being rebuked, and even though the accusations are not objective, they are not unreasonable. We are called the Church of Moscow, the Kremlin, Putin, and Yanukovych.*

He asked Kirill not to use Orthodoxy in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine:

*Even today when we are witnessing the crimes of the previous regime, we still have those who are ready to justify cruelty to effect the supposedly right 'civilisation choice – restoration of Holy Russia's unity'.*

So the UOC (MP) is not monolithic. The affiliation to Moscow pleases some of its faithful in Eastern and Southern Ukraine, and displeases others in Central and Western Ukraine. Many of its parishioners and hierarchs support continuing close ties with Moscow, while many other parishioners favour autocephalous status under the aegis of Eastern Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. At grass roots level such divided loyalties can translate into parish celebrations of the Divine Liturgy that either do or do not offer blessings for Moscow Patriarch Kirill.

Russia's war against Ukraine has exacerbated the division within the UOC (MP). Thirty parishes have transferred their allegiance to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate), although a Moscow Patriarchate representative has claimed the number was only ten. On the one hand Metropolitan Antoni has supported collections for the Ukrainian army, while on the other there are reports of priests from the UOC (MP) offering support and blessings to separatists in Donets'k and Luhans'k regions.

### ***Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate)***

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kyiv Patriarchate) (UOC (KP)), together with the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, actively criticised the rampant corruption under Yanukovych and called for protection of Ukraine against Russian aggression. Patriarch Filaret (Denisenko) strongly criticised the Moscow Patriarchate and Kirill, accusing them of supporting a totalitarian ideology and Putin's attempts to reconstruct an empire.

Following Ukrainian independence in 1991, the Kyiv Patriarchate emerged in 1992 with the support of Orthodox parishes imbued with Ukrainian patriotism and distrust of the subordination to Moscow of the UOC (MP). But it does not have the canonical recognition enjoyed by the latter. Moreover, its leader lacks popular respect. The first head of the UOC (KP), Patriarch Volodymyr (Romanyuk), was a revered survivor of the Gulag, but he died in July 1995. He was succeeded by the present Patriarch, Filaret. In the Soviet era Filaret was Ukrainian Exarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, and had previously worked closely with the KGB in the suppression of religious dissidents. For decades he has kept a mistress and family, and he is widely suspected of misappropriation of church funds. In 1991 Filaret lost to Aleksii II in the Moscow Patriarch election. He soon joined the new UOC (KP) and in 1992 was excommunicated by the Russian Orthodox Church. He has changed his spots from an anti-Ukrainian Soviet church bureaucrat into a militant Ukrainian nationalist.

During the Maidan demonstrations priests of the Kyiv Patriarchate were active in ministering to the protestors, and its central Kyiv headquarters, St Michael's Monastery of the Golden Domes (demolished under Stalin and rebuilt after Ukrainian independence), was used as a shelter and field hospital for Maidan activists.

### ***Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church***

The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church is the third and smallest of the Orthodox jurisdictions in Ukraine, with 1,247 parishes. Like the Kyiv Patriarchate, it is not recognised by other Orthodox jurisdictions. It emerged during Ukraine's brief independence in 1918, was suppressed by Stalin in 1930, revived during the German occupation (1941 -1944), banned again with Soviet victory and re-emerged from 1989 as a result of Gorbachev's *glasnost'* and Ukrainian independence. It thus lacked continuity on Ukrainian soil, and its dream of a united, truly autocephalous, canonical Orthodox Church in Ukraine was kept alive through the twentieth century by means of its parishes overseas, primarily in the United States and Canada. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church has been as vociferous as the Kyiv Patriarchate in its support for the Maidan revolution and opposition to Russian aggression. But its smaller size has limited its visibility and impact.

### ***Protestant Churches in Ukraine***

Because of Ukraine's complex religious environment, with three Orthodox jurisdictions and two Catholic Churches, evangelicals have had more freedom to exist and to evangelise than in Russia. Ukraine, St Petersburg and the Caucasus were the three earliest seedbeds of evangelicalism in Tsarist Russia. Beginning in the 1860s and 1870s, continental pietism spread among German Mennonite colonists in Ukraine, and from them to their Ukrainian peasant neighbours. Dramatic growth occurred in the resulting Baptist and Evangelical Christian denominations in the late nineteenth century, and even more so following Russia's 1905 Edict of Toleration.

In the 1920s these same Evangelicals, plus newly emerging Pentecostals, grew rapidly. In the 1920s Protestants were largely free of communist interference because the infant Soviet regime was then concentrated on eliminating the formerly privileged Orthodox Church. Following intense persecution of all religions in the 1930s, Stalin during the Second World War accepted the help of believers in the fight against Nazi Germany. This new lease on church life was especially evident in Ukraine, which became known as the Soviet Union's 'Bible Belt'. Baptists, Pentecostals and Adventists remain disproportionately strong in Ukraine, compared to Russia.

In the course of over 70 years of persecution and discrimination, Ukrainian and Russian Evangelicals developed an isolationist, siege mentality, rejecting any involvement in Soviet political or social life. However, in Ukraine, following independence, Evangelical isolationism began to erode, first in the Orange Revolution and even more so in the Maidan demonstrations between November 2013 and February 2014.

A Kyiv-based evangelical scholar, Sergiy Tymchenko, identifies three political orientations among Ukrainian Protestants today. Some, as in Soviet times, still eschew any involvement in political life. They 'want to stay away from politics altogether and view themselves as citizens only of the "heavenly fatherland".' Others, especially in Ukraine's East and South, 'approve the Kremlin's actions'. A third stance – new in post-Soviet experience – is that active participation in politics is a Christian duty, in this case supporting the Maidan demonstrations in a 'struggle... for an independent and just society'. A consequence of the crisis between Russia and Ukraine has been increasingly strained relations between Ukrainian and Russian Evangelicals, who had previously been united by longstanding, intimate ties.

A prominent Baptist in Ukrainian politics is Oleksandr Turchynov. Born in 1964 in Dnipropetrovs'k, he headed the propaganda department of Ukraine's Communist Youth League (*Komsomol*) before the breakup of the Soviet Union. Another prominent *Komsomol* member from Dnipropetrovs'k was Yuliya Tymoshenko. Turchynov became a senior member of her party. After the Orange Revolution she became Prime Minister and he headed the

Security Service of Ukraine. When the Maidan Revolution came, he was Speaker of Parliament and became Acting President when Yanukovich fled the country. As early as 2 March 2014 Turchynov spoke by phone with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill, guaranteeing the rights of all churches and confirming his desire to continue dialogue with Russia. He is now Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council. Turchynov was first baptised in an Orthodox church, but in 1999 joined a Baptist church, where he serves as a lay preacher.

Protestants have been targeted by pro-Russian separatists in the Donbas, some of whom identify themselves as warriors for Russian Orthodoxy against Protestants and Catholics. Two sons of the pastor of the Metamorphosis Evangelical Church, Aleksandr Pavlenko, and two deacons of that church, Viktor Brodarsky and Vladimir Velichko, were taken from a church service, tortured and killed by the separatists. Their bodies were exhumed from a mass grave in Slovyans'k, after its return to Ukrainian control last July.

### ***Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church***

The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) is the largest of the Eastern-Rite Catholic Churches. It emerged in the late sixteenth century in Ukrainian lands then part of Catholic Poland. Under the Union of Brest it retained the Orthodox liturgy and married priests, but accepted the authority of the Pope in Rome. Russian Tsars and Soviet Commissars had no time for the UGCC, which they pejoratively called the Uniate Church. It was banned under Tsar Nicholas I in 1839 and again in 1923 and 1946 under Lenin and Stalin, who let the Russian Orthodox Church take over its parishes. From 1946 to 1989 the UGCC was banned. Many bishops, priests, nuns and lay people were sent to the Gulag; some were killed. When it came out of the catacombs in 1989, however, there were still some 200 active underground priests, who had celebrated the Liturgy in the forests and in private homes. Today the church is flourishing, with some four to five million faithful, 3,919 parishes, thousands of priests, monks and sisters and hundreds more in formation.

The Russian Orthodox Church resents the fact that the UGCC has returned and reclaimed its properties. This remains one of the major stumbling blocks to closer relations between the Catholic and Russian Orthodox churches. In Western Ukraine there are many churches which have been used at different times by Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Greek Catholics.

One joke is that in most of Ukraine religious people go to church on Sunday; in L'viv *everyone* goes to church on Sunday! It is the only Christian place I know where Divine Liturgy is broadcast over loudspeakers to the overflow of faithful standing outside the church, in all weathers. The Muslim world does not have a monopoly on the call to prayer!

The UGCC has strongly promoted the revival of Ukrainian national culture and language. Pro-Western and pro-European, as a result of its experience in emigration as well as underground, it actively supported the Orange and Maidan Revolutions, ensuring regular prayers and liturgies on the Maidan and working with other churches, except for the UOC (MP). It coined the name 'revolution of dignity' for the 2013- 2014 uprising, articulating the moral aspect of the protest against Yanukovich's kleptocratic and murderous regime. The name has become widely used.

Senior figures in the UGCC are conscious that the roots of Christianity in Ukraine go back to 988, not only before the division of the eastern Slavs, but before the Great Schism between Eastern and Western Christendom. They nurture a dream, although they know it cannot be realised today, of a single Ukrainian Church. They believe the UGCC, with its Orthodox liturgy and links to Rome, could help to bridge the divide.

## ***Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine***

The Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine (sometimes called the Latin-Rite Church to distinguish it from the Eastern-Rite or Greek Catholic Church) has about 1100 parishes, predominantly in Western and Central Ukraine, and about a million faithful. Its presence stems from the Polish history of those territories. The Roman Catholic cathedral in L'viv is a Polish cathedral. It was no surprise that the Polish Pope, St John Paul II, was keen to visit Ukraine. He finally went to Kyiv and L'viv in 2001. One of his themes was the need for Christendom to breathe with both its lungs, the Western and the Eastern.

In Kyiv my family and I used to go to Mass at St Alexander's, the principal Roman Catholic church in the centre of the city, which had been an astronomical observatory in the Soviet era. Masses were said in Ukrainian, Russian, Polish and English. The English Mass, at 8.45 on Sunday, was for the international community. This was followed by a Ukrainian Mass at 10.00. This was always packed, and Ukrainians would come in good time to get their places. Sometimes this meant them taking our places in the pews while we had gone to receive Communion! I once heard the parish priest ticking off his Ukrainian parishioners, telling them that the foreigners too had a right to be in the church! During the Orange Revolution the priest kept the church, which is close to the Maidan, open so that the protestors could rest there. During the 2013-2014 Revolution too, St Alexander's was used as a shelter and field hospital for the protestors.

## **Prospects**

Last year's Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine brought most of the churches together in support of a popular protest against an unjust and criminal regime. Russia's aggression against Ukraine, in Crimea and then in the Donbas, have also brought Ukraine's churches together with the overwhelming majority of Ukrainian people. The exception, of course, is the UOC (MP), which finds itself torn between loyalty to Moscow and loyalty to many of its own faithful in Ukraine.

A knowledgeable Moscow academic has commented on the effects of the crisis between Russia and Ukraine on the religious scene in Ukraine. Andrei Zubov, a historian and church-state specialist, lost his job at the prestigious Moscow State Institute of International Relations for publishing an editorial comparing Putin's move against Crimea with Hitler's seizure of the Sudetenland in 1938. Zubov expects that the longer the conflict between Ukraine and Russia persists, the greater the likelihood of a single Ukrainian Orthodox Church recognised by the Eastern Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch. He notes that a united Ukrainian Church would redraw the wider map of Orthodoxy.

On 22 February last year the Synod of the UOC (KP) proposed 'a dialogue leading to reunification' of Ukraine's Orthodox Churches. The UOC (MP) seems willing at least to discuss the possibility, but as long as Filaret (excommunicated by the Russian Orthodox Church) heads the UOC (KP) the schism is likely to persist. Meanwhile a complete break between the UOC (MP) and the Russian Orthodox Church could be more likely. When Filaret passes from the scene, conditions for reuniting Ukrainian Orthodoxy may become more promising. And if the Orthodox Churches could come together, then it is not beyond the bounds of imagination that the Catholic Churches in Ukraine could come closer to them too. After all, the larger of the Catholic Churches in Ukraine already uses the Orthodox liturgy.

In conclusion I can do no better than to recall Our Lord's prayer at the Last Supper (John 17.20-21):

*It is not only for them that I pray; I pray for those who are to find faith in me through their word; that they may all be one; that they too may be one in us, as Thou Father, art in me, and I in thee; so that the world may come to believe that it is thou who hast sent me.*

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