

The Theme of this Year's Synod The Role of the Laity in the Life and Mission of The Church ¹

On Tuesday, September 11, the Synod of Bishops devoted its attention to the consideration of the main theme of this year's gathering of the hierarchy - "*The role of the laity in the life and mission of the Church.*"

Four reports highlighted:

- biblical-theological reasoning, vocation and mission of the laity in the Church (Fr. Taras Barshevsky)
- historical context of lay movements in the Church (Dr. Oleg Behen, UCU)
- activity of the laity in parishes today (Fr. Dr. Mr. Andrew Onuferko)
- vision of the laity as to their role in the life and mission of the Church [Metropolitan Lawrence (Huculak)].

During their discussions the bishops gratefully acknowledged the dedication and sacrifice of the laity of the Ukrainian Catholic Church throughout its history, particularly their role in preserving the faith in difficult social and political circumstances of the last century - the four waves of emigration and persecution of the Church on the maternal land. This holiness was recognized by all the laity of the Catholic Church, particularly through the beatification of the Pratulyn martyrs and of Blessed Martyr Vladimir Pryjma who became examples of fidelity to the Church and commitment to sacrificial service. The bishops emphasized the importance of the role of the laity in the Church since from the midst of deeply faithful laity emerge numerous vocations to the priesthood and to religious life. In this regard, spiritual and pastoral care of families and catechesis of children, youth and adults takes on special significance. The members of the Synod expressed their conviction that the laity must broach and appreciate their specific ministry in the Church, so that together with the clergy and religious, under the leadership hierarchy, they can create a single body - a living and life-giving community of Christ's disciples. To give practical dimension to the synodal discussions, the synod fathers held small group discussions regarding the participation of the laity in implementing the Pastoral letter of His Beatitude Sviatoslav "*The Vibrant Parish - a place to encounter the living Christ.*" Further, the bishops analyzed the possibility of activating the laity in the life of the UGCC Church in the different regions of the world, and the difficulties involved in this effort. Following the synod further steps will be identified for the growth and spiritual formation of the laity, and their deeper involvement in the mission of the Church.

¹ http://www.ucet.ca/UserFiles/File/Synod/2a_Synod_-_Role_of_laity-_E.pdf