

Bishop Andriy Rabi, Auxiliary of the Philadelphia Archeparchy, explains the Archeparchy Sobor process

On December 17, 2018, His Beatitude Sviatoslav, Head and Father of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, signed a decree to convene the VII session of the Patriarchal (All-Church) Sobor (Council) of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC) on the topic “Emigration, Settlement and Global Unity of the UGCC,” which was supposed to take place on August 26-29, 2020 in Lviv. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions the Patriarchal Sobor was postponed.

However, deaneries, eparchies, and archeparchies held their own Sobor sessions in preparation for the 2020 Patriarchal Sobor. The Archeparchy of Philadelphia held four sessions of its Archeparchial Sobor— some in person, some online—during which clergy, religious, and laity focused on the global unity of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church as well as addressed local issues and offered possible solutions to strengthen unity between different church structures.

In the following series of short videos, Bishop Andriy Rabi, Auxiliary of the Philadelphia Archeparchy guides us through the Council process and explains its decisions and resolutions.

SESSION 1 (October 28, 2019): Thematic Analysis

This joint session was held at Immaculate Conception Cathedral and was attended by 194 delegates. Building on the theme of “communion-unity” proposed for the Patriarchal Sobor in 2020, the delegates were asked to reflect on positive and negative experiences of communion-unity at the parish and archeparchial levels, as well as to propose ways of strengthening communion-unity at these levels.

SESSION 2 (December 7, 2019): Laity Gifts, Summary of Table Reports

This joint session was held at St. Michael the Archangel's parish in Jenkintown, PA, and was attended by 171 delegates. The focus of the session was on the role of the laity in reference to the first three elements of the Vibrant Parish program of the UGCC: Word of God-Catechesis, Liturgy and Prayer, Serving one's neighbor (Diakonia). The delegates were asked to reflect on: "What Gifts can the laity offer to address the needs and promote the mission of the archeparchy?" in reference to the three elements.

SESSION 3 (November-December 2020): PRIORITIZED RESOLUTIONS / COVID-19 BREAKOUT REPORT

In the year that followed the December 2019 session, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic the Archeparchy decided to summarize the key proposals of the first two sessions in the form of resolutions, and present them to the delegates for prioritization. As it was not possible to hold a joint session, the decision was made to hold four regional sessions, using ZOOM as a meeting platform. These regional sessions also included breakout sessions on the positive and negative impact of the pandemic, with proposals on moving forward based on the lessons learned.

SESSION 4 (January 23, 2021): Summary ZOOM Session Report

In this joint ZOOM session, the delegates were divided according to deanery and asked to:

- 1) Express their hopes and expectations regarding the Archeparchial Pastoral Council,
- 2) Propose two candidates from each deanery to form an Archeparchial Pastoral Council planning committee.

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