

“PILGRIMS OF HOPE”

Program of Spiritual Formation
of Ukrainian Youth for the Jubilee Year



4. THE GUIDE



Meeting 3
March 2025

3. The people

Pilgrimage and Confession of Faith



3.1 Prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
O Heavenly King. The Lord's Prayer. Hail Mary.



3.2 Patron Saint

Blessed Hieromartyr
Omelian Kovch

Blessed Hieromartyr Omelian Kovch is an example of what it means to be part of one's people, to bear responsibility for them, and to serve them even at the cost of one's own life. He was born into a priestly family, and from a young age his life was intertwined with the fate of the Ukrainian people. As a Greek Catholic priest, he not only proclaimed the Gospel, but also actively helped his faithful, supporting them in the most difficult times.

During World War II, Father Omelian became a symbol of mercy for many people. He did not divide people by nationality or religion, but helped everyone who needed it. In particular, he saved Jews from persecution by issuing them false baptismal certificates. For him, every person was important, and he could not remain aloof when cruelty reigned around.



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3.2 Patron Saint

Blessed Hieromartyr Omelian Kovch

For his activities, he was arrested by the Nazis and sent to the Majdanek concentration camp. But even in the death camp, he continued his ministry: he supported the prisoners, confessed to them, prayed with them. In a letter to his family, he wrote: "Here I see God - the God who is one for all, regardless of our nationality or faith. Here we are all equal." He refused the offer of release, saying that he could not leave his people. He died in Majdanek, becoming a martyr for his faith and his fellow men.

The blessed new martyr of the Ukrainian people, Omelian Kovch, is a symbol of responsibility for the people. He was not only a spiritual leader - he was a true shepherd, ready to sacrifice himself so that his people could live. His example inspires not to be indifferent, to help each other and to understand that we are one whole, regardless of difficulties and trials.



3.3 God's Word

Genesis 12:1-6

GOD told Abram: "Leave your country, your family, and your father's home for a land that I will show you. I'll make you a great nation and bless you. I'll make you famous; you'll be a blessing. I'll bless those who bless you; those who curse you I'll curse. All the families of the Earth will be blessed through you." So Abram left just as GOD said, and Lot left with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot with him, along with all the possessions and people they had gotten in Haran, and set out for the land of Canaan and arrived safe and sound. Abram passed through the country as far as Shechem and the Oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites occupied the land.



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3.3 God's Word

Reflections:

There are pilgrimages and “pilgrimages” in quotation marks. The Ukrainian people, like the people of Israel, have their shrines - places of affirmation of faith and deep prayer. Our pilgrims go to Zarvanytsia, Univ Lavra, Stradcha, Pohonia, Krylos, Kyiv-Pechersk and Pochaiv Lavra, to St. Sophia of Kyiv, Letychiv or Hoshiv. The road to these shrines is a path of faith that can be covered in a few days, but it leaves a mark on the heart for a lifetime. The people of Israel, the people of Jesus, made pilgrimages to Jerusalem, where they stayed for several days. The journey could last for weeks, but in the end the pilgrims returned home.

But there is another kind of pilgrimage - the one that millions of Ukrainians are forced to make after Russia's full-scale invasion. It is a pilgrimage of exile, separation, homesickness. Migration through war is not a choice, but a necessity. Millions of Ukrainian families have set out, not knowing whether they will return home. Like the biblical migrants, they are seeking safety, food, peace. But God does not abandon them in this ordeal, for even in dispersion, His people remain a people.

Abraham left his land at the call of God, and Ukrainians are forced to leave their homes due to explosions, occupation, and danger. Like the Israelites who survived slavery in Egypt, our people today are fighting for their right to return to their native home. Many Ukrainians, like the biblical Ruth, find refuge among strangers, work and support those around them, even in the most difficult conditions.



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3.3 God's Word

Reflections:

There are different pilgrimages: some are voluntary, spiritual, purifying the heart. And there are those that carry pain and coercion. But even in dispersion, even in the most difficult trials, the story of salvation continues.

Ukraine is walking its way of the cross, but on this path we are not alone - we are together, as a people, as a community of God, seeking light amidst the darkness of war. And our path leads to victory and returning home.



3.4 Subject block

We are the people who move forward together, like Israel in the wilderness, like the first Christians who realized that they are one. Each of us has our own calling, but we are not individual travelers, but part of a greater community.

Being the people means not just walking side by side, but taking responsibility for each other, helping each other grow and change. This is not a place for indifference or passivity - everyone is important and needed.

The people are not just a group of people. It is a community where everyone is different, but together they create something greater. No one is superfluous here, because we are one!



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3.4 Subject block

The people are not just a land or a shared history, but the people who support each other, preserve faith, traditions, and build a future together. Everyone is important, because even a small contribution makes us stronger.

Youth is not only the future, but also the present of the people. It depends on you what the country will be like tomorrow. Being part of the people means not standing aside, but acting, helping, changing the world around you. After all, true strength is in unity, as our Ukrainian song says: "In unity is the strength of the people, God, grant us unity."



3.5 Personal reflections

- Do you feel a sense of belonging to your community, group, city, God's people?
- Are you aware of your participation in the upbringing, growth, and development of others?
- Do you take the initiative and make a personal effort to accept those who are different from you?
- Do you, like the first apostles, see yourself as part of a "WE" on the journey? Or is it perhaps difficult for you to accept this and you prefer to remain a "lone wolf"?
- Do you usually delegate responsibility for decisions and duties to others, or do you enjoy collaborating to grow together, even if it is slowly, stopping to wait for those who are lagging behind, but always together?



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3.6 Work in groups



“We are the people of God, one in the whole world”

Duration: 30 minutes

Format: work in groups (6-8 or 8-10 people)

Purpose:

To help young people realize that the people are not just those who live in one territory, but all who are connected by a common faith, culture, and values. The Ukrainian people are not just citizens of a country, but a great family of God, scattered throughout the world, which has its own mission.

Biblical context:

- 1 Peter 2:9 - “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”
- Galatians 3:28 - “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

The role of the Church in the unity of the people

The Church, in particular the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC), plays a particularly important role in preserving the unity of the Ukrainian people. It is the spiritual home that unites Ukrainians around the world. No matter where a person is - in the USA, Canada, Italy, Poland or Argentina - in the church they can find support, prayer, and community. Greek Catholic parishes abroad help preserve identity, language, and faith so that Ukrainians do not lose touch with their people. As His Beatitude Sviatoslav noted in an interview in November 2019, the Church strives to accompany each of its faithful, wherever they are, saying: “We have this slogan: ‘Your Church is always and everywhere with you.’ Our Church is spread around the world by our people. They carry it within themselves, and they are a part of it.”



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3.6 Work in groups

Step 1: Introductory reflection (5 min)

The presenter asks the groups:

- What does it mean to you to be part of God's people?
- How can we be one even when we are in different parts of the world?
- Have you felt that the Church unites us regardless of borders?

After a brief discussion, the presenter explains: Ukrainians are not only those who live in Ukraine, but also those who were forced to leave their homeland, but remain part of one people of God. We all unite in prayer, deeds of mercy, and support for each other.

Step 2: "Map of God's People" (10 min)

Task: Each group receives a sheet of paper (or tablet) and creates a "Map of God's People." What should be done?

1. Mark the countries where Ukrainians currently live due to war and other circumstances.
2. Mark churches and communities - find on the map or add examples of Ukrainian Greek Catholic parishes abroad that are a spiritual center for emigrants.
3. Add Divine Connections - use arrows or words to explain how Ukrainians support each other through faith (prayer, service, church communities, charity).
4. Come up with a biblical motto - find a passage from Scripture that expresses the unity of God's people (for example, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" - Matt. 18:20).

Step 3: "The Message of Unity in Christ" (10 min)

Task: Each group should prepare a short address to Ukrainians around the world that expresses our unity in God and responsibility for each other.



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3.6 Work in groups

What should be included?

- Biblical reference - a passage that inspires unity.
- Words of encouragement and prayers for those who are far from home.
- Call to action - how we can help those in need (prayer, letters of support, donations, volunteering).
- The role of the Church is to emphasize that Ukrainian Greek Catholic communities abroad are an important place of unity for the people.

Groups can present this as an oral presentation or a short written message.

Step 4: Summary and prayer (5 min).

The presenter summarizes:

- We are God's people, regardless of where we live.
- Faith is what makes us one.
- The unity of the people is not only a common language or culture, but a shared responsibility for each other.
- The Church is the spiritual home that unites Ukrainians around the world, regardless of where they are.

The final prayer: Each group can pray briefly for the unity of Ukrainians, for those who are forced to live far away, and for the strength to continue the path of God's people.

Result:

Participants will understand that the people are not just a territory, but a living people of God who have a mission: to be a light in the world, to support each other, and to carry the faith wherever they are. And most importantly, the Church unites people scattered around the world, helping them preserve their identity and faith.



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3.7 Testimony

#pilgrimsofhope
#jubileeofyouth
#thejubileeyear2025

We encourage young people to post the hashtags during the month:
#pilgrimsofhope #jubileeofyouth2025 #jubileeyear2025

We don't just live next to each other - we are one people, called to support, inspire and move forward together. These tasks will help you feel the power of unity, test yourself in teamwork and realize your contribution to a common cause. By completing them, you can see that the true power of the people is in their people, in their desire to act, to help and to build the future together.

1. "My Contribution to the People" - Take a piece of paper or make notes on your phone and write down what exactly you can do for your community or country. It can be helping others, volunteering, preserving cultural traditions, studying, or working for the benefit of the people. Share this with your friends or discuss it with your family.
2. "Unity in Action" - Gather a team of like-minded people (friends, classmates, parishioners) and together do a good deed for your community: help the elderly, clean up the area, hold a charity event or organize a meeting that will unite people. Feel what teamwork is and how together you can change the world for the better.
3. "My Hero of the People" - Choose a historical or modern person who is an example of loyalty to your people for you. It can be a military man, a volunteer, a scientist, a cultural figure, or just a person you know who works for the common good. Write or tell your friends why this person inspires you, and how their life reflects the idea of unity and service to others.
4. "Prayer for the People" - For seven days, dedicate a few minutes each day to praying for Ukraine, its future, the unity of the people, and the strength of the spirit of Ukrainians. If you wish, you can write down your thoughts and experiences during this prayer time, and then share with those who also want to pray for their people.



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1.8 Final prayer

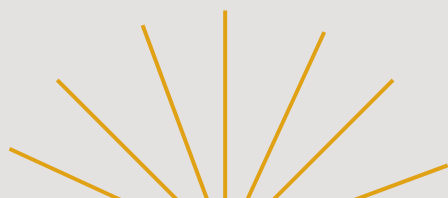
Completion of spiritual work, prayer of choice: Akathist to the Passion of Christ / Stations of the Cross / Jesus Prayer / Rosary / Theseus / Prayer in Silence.

As part of the Jubilee Year, Ukrainian Greek Catholic youth from all over the world will make a great pilgrimage to Rome, where the Jubilee of Youth will be celebrated. within the framework of which the World Day of Ukrainian Youth will be held.

This event will be an opportunity for meeting, prayer, spiritual renewal and confirmation in faith, especially in light of Patriarch Joseph Slipyi's call for the unity of Ukrainians to "gather in the dispersion of those who are."

The meeting in the Pro-Cathedral of St. Sophia will be a special moment of the pilgrimage. It will not only be an opportunity for joint prayer, but also an opportunity to feel part of a large Ukrainian family, which, despite the distance, continues to live in the light of faith and Ukrainian traditions. It will be a continuation of Patriarch Joseph's dream - to preserve the spiritual heritage and support the unity of the Ukrainian people.

Patriarch Joseph Slipyi always emphasized the importance of the unity of Ukrainians, wherever they are. His famous appeal "in the dispersion of those who are" sounds more relevant today than ever.



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Books:

Annex:

“The Cathedral” - Oles Honchar

A novel about the spiritual heritage of a people fighting not only for physical freedom, but also for the preservation of their culture and traditions. The cathedral in the book is a symbol of a people that can decline if people are indifferent. It is a reminder that everyone is responsible for the future of their land, and a real people are those who care about their history and spiritual values.

“Six of Crows” - Leigh Bardugo

A group of criminals gets a chance at a new life if they can complete an almost impossible mission. Although they are completely different and do not trust each other, over time they learn to work together and rely on the team. This book demonstrates that even the weakest can become strong when they act as a single unit. People are not just individuals, but mutual assistance when everyone moves towards a common goal.

“Lord of the Flies” - William Golding

A group of children find themselves stranded on a deserted island without adults and are forced to create their own society. At first they try to cooperate, but later the struggle for power and the lack of unity leads to chaos and violence. This book is a warning: if a people is not united around common values, it will collapse from within. It is responsibility and respect for each other that make a society strong.



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Books:

Annex:

“Niels' Amazing Journey with the Wild Geese” - Selma Lagerlof

A boy who was initially selfish and indifferent, traveling with geese, learns about compassion, responsibility, and mutual assistance. He begins to understand that people are not just people around him, but those who together create their country. This tale shows that through cooperation and caring for others can one become part of a greater whole.

“With Fire and Sword” - Henryk Sienkiewicz

A historical novel about the struggle of the Ukrainian people for their freedom during the Khmelnytskyi Uprising. It shows different heroes who have different attitudes towards the war and the unity of the people. The book reminds us that true independence is possible only when people understand the importance of a common goal and are ready to fight for it together.



Movies:

“Next goal wins” (2023)

Based on true events, the film tells the story of the American Samoa football team, which was voted the worst in the world. A new coach helps the athletes realize that success depends not only on talent, but also on unity and belief in their own strength. Players who previously could not work as a team are transformed into a single force ready to fight. This is the story of a people who, through sports victory, find their own dignity.



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Movies:

Annex:

“Encanto” (2021)

This cartoon tells the story of the Madrigal family, where everyone has a unique gift, except for the main character - Mirabelle. When their home is threatened, she discovers that real magic is not special abilities, but unity and support of relatives. The film reminds us that a people is not just a group of people, but a community that sticks together in trials. Only when everyone begins to hear and understand each other, they become a real family.

“Krutyy 1918. Winter of the braves” (2019)

A film about the feat of Ukrainian students who defended their land from the Bolshevik offensive in the battle near Kruty. The young men, understanding the danger, do not retreat and fight for the future of their country. This is a story about the fact that the people consist not only of those who rule, but of everyone who is ready to contribute to its independence. Each of them played their role in this struggle, even if it was unequal.

“Myrnyj-21” (2023)

The story of Ukrainian soldiers who are faced with a choice: to surrender to the occupiers or to fight to the end. The main characters of the film demonstrate the power of unity, because their unity allows them to resist the enemy, despite the numerical superiority of the enemy. This is a film about the fact that real people are those who support each other, do not betray and do not surrender. Unity of spirit and loyalty to their land become a more powerful weapon than any equipment or army.

