

Chapter IV. Elements of reconciliation

4.1 On the demands for repentance

4.1.1 The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church: repentance as the individual conversion of the heart

From the very beginning it is worth admitting that there are not many references to repentance in the analysed texts of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. A distinguished feature of the documents is that the authors speak about personal repentance. For instance, Liubomyr Husar dwells upon the common guilt of Ukrainians against other nations but suggests personal conversion. The same concerns the reconciliation between the Churches – communion. Also communion is to be reached through individual repentance and conversion of the heart. In the section about the sacrament of confession, *Catechism of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church* shortly mentions that one of the important conditions of this sacrament is the reconciliation with the neighbour.<sup>1</sup> However, this topic is not developed further. In his presentation at the synod of the German Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Ukraine in 2010, Mykhailo Dymyd, a Greek-Catholic theologian, argued that personal repentance is a prerequisite to reconciliation. Only God knows all the truth about sins in the souls. The repentance before God is necessary because a sinful person spreads evil around: “The real reconciliation is not reconciliation de jure, however reconciliation in the heart, in the soul.”<sup>2</sup> The repenting person gets the grace to evaluate other people in the light of God’s love and mercy. Perhaps such an individualisation of forgiveness and reconciliation needs correction. Not only personal sins but common prejudices, images of the evil and stereotypes<sup>3</sup> have to be worked out by the whole Church instead of being abandoned to every individual.

---

1 Synod of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, *Catechism*, 151.

2 Dymyd, *Reconciliation*. Translation from the original source.

3 Mykhailo Dymyd has prepared a list of typical stereotypes of certain Greek-Catholics (theological-canonical, ideological-ethnic, denominational, and moral) that they developed during history. Among them is for instance the belief that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate is the agent of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine or that one can disregard the Church or the State law. The author is of the opinion that reconciliation means overcoming those stereotypes that would contribute to social and ecclesial unity. (See

According to Husar, repentance is a necessary step towards rapprochement between the Ukrainian Churches. The contribution of Christians in Ukraine to the unity of the Church consists in the recognition of their limitedness and imperfection as Christians. The Church is divided by human sins; therefore genuine repentance is the starting point of the change of attitude towards other people and confessions. One has to examine one's conscience and understand whether there is a sincere desire to be united or whether one considers oneself better than other people.<sup>4</sup> The first means towards repentance is a prayer of atonement that every single Christian and every community must perform. Such personal repentance will be the first step for the new beginning here and now without waiting for the establishment of the external conjuncture favourable for the Church unity.

Surprisingly, repentance is also mentioned in the official pronouncements of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church on the healing of the memory of the Holodomor. Criticising the communist regime for its violent efforts to build a paradise without God, together with other Heads of the Christian Churches in Ukraine, Husar claims that the development of the country does not depend so much upon suggested reforms but is grounded on the internal transfiguration of every person.<sup>5</sup> The authors do not directly mention the word repentance but they emphasise that everyone has to change what one can not condemning the other but eradicating one's own sins.<sup>6</sup> Being aware of their own sins, people can do everything possible that the tragedies of the level of the Holodomor never occur again.

In a society that for so many years has been under the communist dictatorship people have lost the understanding of their human dignity. Ihor Isichenko, a bishop of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, similarly underlined the significance of repentance for the regeneration of society: "Without the aptitude to say "I am sorry" we will never establish

---

Mykhailo Dymyd, "Stereotypy hreko-katolykiv abo Naslidky ran mynuloho na suchasnyi sposib dumannia deiakykh hreko-katolykiv" {Greek-Catholic stereotypes or consequences of the wounds of the past on the contemporary way of thinking of certain Greek-Catholics}, <http://risu.org.ua/ua/index/blog/~Dymyd/35381/> (accessed January 23, 2014)).

4 No. 319, 173.

5 No. 277, 461.

6 Ibid.

neither civil society, not the peace in our soul.”<sup>7</sup> Bohdan Dziurakh, a Greek-Catholic bishop, in connection with the impending challenges in Ukrainian society after the EuroMaidan, similarly claimed that Ukraine needs both personal and all-national repentance. Every individual is responsible not only for the own affairs but for the developments in the entire society and hence “the process of the purification of society has to begin from the purification of the heart of each of us.”<sup>8</sup>

Repentance equally means that the evildoer takes a strong stance of not repeating his wrongdoings again. This element appears very rarely in the studied official texts of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. Eventually, the Church leadership is convinced that it is self-evident that repentance presupposes a decision of changing one’s attitude and conduct in the future. In his address to the parish priests of the city of Lviv for the preparation of the Purification and Reconciliation Day from August 2000, Husar holds that the guilt for the tragic history of that city in the last century rests also on the Lviv citizens themselves; therefore, if the next century is to be more peaceful and less violent, the personal attitude of everyone has to undergo a process of profound change. People should not commit again offences against justice and love to the fellow men or even against themselves.<sup>9</sup> Having released oneself from the burden of the past through repentance and forgiveness, one should take the firm decision not to return to the same faults.<sup>10</sup>

A similar reference to this element of reconciliation we encounter in Husar’s sermon during the liturgy on the Reconciliation Day. After the purification of memory, having realised what indeed happened, one has to

---

7 Ihor Isichenko, “Life Histories in the Framework of the Project ‘Ukraina aktyvna – 2010: zahoiennia mynuloho” {Active Ukraine – 2010: healing of the past}, interview, *Religion.in.ua*, [http://www.religion.in.ua/zmi/ukrainian\\_zmi/18339-inter-vyu-arxiyepiskopa-igorya-isichenka-istoriyi-zhittya-v-ramkax-proektu-ukrayina-aktivna-2010-zagoyennya-minulogo.html](http://www.religion.in.ua/zmi/ukrainian_zmi/18339-inter-vyu-arxiyepiskopa-igorya-isichenka-istoriyi-zhittya-v-ramkax-proektu-ukrayina-aktivna-2010-zagoyennya-minulogo.html) (accessed January 13, 2014). Translation from the original source.

8 Bohdan Dziurakh, “Ukrainsiam potriben osobystyi i zahalnonatsionalnyi ispyt sumlinnia” {Ukrainians need a personal and all-national examination of their conscience}, interview by Oksana Klymonchuk, *Ugcc.org.ua*, [http://news.ugcc.org.ua/articles/vladika\\_bogdan\\_dzyurah\\_naperedodni\\_40dennogo\\_postu\\_ukraint\\_syam\\_potriben\\_osobistiy\\_i\\_zagalnonatsionalnyy\\_ispyt\\_sumlinnya\\_69445.html](http://news.ugcc.org.ua/articles/vladika_bogdan_dzyurah_naperedodni_40dennogo_postu_ukraint_syam_potriben_osobistiy_i_zagalnonatsionalnyy_ispyt_sumlinnya_69445.html) (accessed March 5, 2014). Translation from the original source.

9 No. 99, 185.

10 Ibid.

make the strong decision not to repeat the evil caused in the past because “without that intention to reform there is no reconciliation, no hope for the better future.”<sup>11</sup> Further Liubomyr Husar explains that “to reform means not to repeat consciously and voluntarily anything that could offend the individual person, a group of people, or the whole nation.”<sup>12</sup> It is an interesting element in the theology of the reconciliation of Husar which is usually not mentioned in other common reconciliation theories.

Still, repentance is not only a personal affair; it equally applies to the Churches as institutions. Commenting upon the achievements of Ukrainian Christianity in independent Ukraine, Mykhailo Cherenkov, a Protestant Ukrainian theologian, argued that repentance is what all of the Ukrainian Churches have to complete in order to conduct a plausible evangelisation:

“The Church has to overcome certain Soviet stereotypes, experiences, schemes that derived from the Soviet past inside the Church. This point the Churches should have intertwined in their messages on the occasion of the 1025th anniversary of the baptism of the Kyivan Rus. The Church has to repent of and condemn different forms of cooperation and coexistence with the regime which compromise the Church.”<sup>13</sup>

Summarising what has been said above, two related leading trends are evident in the thinking of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. First, reconciliation and its elements are considered as the personal task of every individual. Second, as the conversion of the individual, repentance brings about changes on the level of society because the renewed person builds relations with the world around in a new transfigured way. However, the criticism that more attention should be paid to the repentance of structural sin is indispensable.

#### 4.1.2 Miroslav Volf: “To repent of what perpetrators do to our soul”

Even though Volf defends the duty of the unconditional forgiveness with regard to every person as we will see it later, repentance also plays a significant role in his theology. Forgiveness is a social affair because it happens in the heart and mind of a person and is offered as a gift to a concrete

---

11 No. 346, 579; No. 128, 240. Translation from the original source.

12 Ibid. Translation from the original source.

13 Mykhailo Cherenkov, interview by Taras Antoshevskyyi, *Youtube.com*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydUDACv1--8> (accessed January 17, 2014). Translation from the original source.

wrongdoer.<sup>14</sup> Repentance is needed not only after the mass violation of human rights, it is also a means to eradicate evil values and practices that dominate in society, such as envy or enmity: “To repent means to resist the seductiveness of the sinful values and practices and to let the new order of God’s reign be established in one’s heart.”<sup>15</sup> Not only wrongdoers but also victims should repent. The latter should do it in order “not to allow the oppressors to determine the terms under which social conflict is carried out, the values around which the conflict is raging, and the means by which it is fought.”<sup>16</sup> Victims “need to repent of what the perpetrators do to our soul,”<sup>17</sup> for mirroring the behaviour of the wrongdoers and for denying responsibility for the existing state of affairs. Here the position of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church coincides with Volf, as it follows from the documents on the memory of the Holodomor and the healing of the memories of war. The overcoming of the communist evil is not only about, for instance, getting rid of the old Soviet symbols<sup>18</sup> around the country<sup>19</sup> and replacing them by national-oriented and Christian names

---

14 Volf, *Free of Charge*, 181.

15 Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace* (1996), 116.

16 *Ibid.*

17 *Ibid.*, 117.

18 Nazar Kovalchuk, “Reklama Ukrainy bez Lenina” {Promoting Ukraine without Lenin}, <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/2306373.html> (accessed February 12, 2011). An interesting fact is that the authors of the promo video of Ukraine, a co-organiser of the European Football Championship in 2012, have “cut” from the film the monument of Lenin still standing on the Freedom Square of an eastern Ukrainian city and the first capital of the country until 1934, Kharkiv. The public opinion poll concerning the absence of the monument of Lenin in the promo video of Ukraine demonstrates contradicting positions. Some respondents support the removal of this monument not only from the video, but also from the Freedom Square itself where it currently stands. They see it as a remainder of the Soviet symbols that have nothing to do in contemporary Ukraine. The opposite opinion says that the monument has to be preserved because it is part of the history of the city and it has to be known to the coming generations. This example with the Lenin monument opens up a floor for the interesting discussion about the role of such symbols in the building of the nation.

19 Ernst Lüdemann, *Die Auseinandersetzung mit der kommunistischen Vergangenheit in der Ukraine*, *Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien* 39 (Cologne: Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, 1997), 21-24. It took the form of removing the monuments of the Soviet era heroes and state leaders, first of all Stalin and Lenin, renaming Soviet-bound places (e.g., streets, towns or villages), changing the military symbolism.

and images.<sup>20</sup> Both Miroslav Volf and the Greek-Catholic bishops emphasise that the overcoming of the past equally demands repentance for disseminating the seeds of enmity, indifference, envy, and irresponsibility.

Forgiveness should not only be granted, but also received by the offender, which presumes the acceptance of the accusation and the release from debt. Repentance is then a necessary *consequence* of the offered forgiveness and not its prerequisite. Repentance is essential because when we refuse to confess, we reject the offered forgiveness. In the words of Volf, “By confessing, I recognise myself as the one who needs forgiveness and who can appropriately receive it. By failing to confess, I declare that I am in no need of forgiveness. To me, in that case, forgiveness isn’t a gift; it’s an insult, a declaration that I’ve done the wrong I claim not to have done.”<sup>21</sup> Myroslav-Ivan Liubachivskyi underlined the same idea regarding the refusal of the Moscow Patriarchate to accept the forgiveness of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. Cardinal Liubachivskyi noted that the acceptance of that forgiveness would mean that the Moscow Patriarchate recognises its fault of the cooperation with the communist regime in the liquidation of the Greek-Catholic Church. The Russian Orthodox Church is not so far.

Consequently, Miroslav Volf is convinced that repentance is not a prerequisite to forgiveness but its consequence. Both Volf and the Ukrainians bishops speak about personal repentance. For the Greek-Catholic Church leadership, repentance is the initial step to reconciliation, the recognition of one’s imperfection as a Christian. Realising one’s own sinfulness and working for the eradication of sins is the starting point for rapprochement. Moreover, even the victim has to repent of the hatred towards the wrongdoer. Myroslav-Ivan Liubachivskyi told that Ukrainians must ask the forgiveness of the Russian people and the Church because of their lack of love. Exactly that what Volf implies by claiming that the victim must repent of what the perpetrator did to his or her soul.

---

20 The images on the new currency hryvna introduced in 1996 illustrate this idea well. The names of the ancient Kyiv princes Volodymyr the Great and Yaroslav the Wise, the headman of the Cossacks Ivan Mazepa, and the first President of independent Ukraine in 1917 Mykhailo Hrushevskyi were depicted on the new currency bills.

21 Volf, *Free of Charge*, 153.

## 4.2 On the path to forgiveness

### 4.2.1 The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church: “We forgive and ask for forgiveness”

In my reading, forgiveness – an element that is usually mentioned together with reconciliation – is not often emphasised in the studied documents of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. For instance, in the sermon delivered during the liturgy on the Reconciliation Day in 2001, Liubomyr Husar does not mention forgiveness at all. He highlights the purification of memory and the decision not to repeat the evil deeds but completely omits the need for asking and granting forgiveness.<sup>22</sup> This fact is remarkable, keeping in mind that this sermon was the only official address to all the faithful of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in the city of Lviv on the occasion of the Reconciliation Day, which means that it was mainly there that the faithful could learn Husar’s vision of reconciliation. The reader notes that in his early texts Husar focused on personal forgiveness that is asking forgiveness from God for committed sins. Instead, the significance of forgiveness on the broader societal level was at first not elucidated.

In what follows in that section I will unfold different facets of forgiveness in the teaching of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church.

### *Forgiveness as a feature of martyrs*

In his address to the clergy on the Purification and Reconciliation Day, Husar dedicated a separate section to the theme of forgiveness. Remarkably, the meaning of forgiveness is explained in the example of martyrs which is particularly eloquent for the Greek-Catholic faithful. The essence of martyrdom and suffering consists not in the mere fact of experiencing pain but in the ability to forgive and bless the wrongdoer. The one who died cursing the tormentor is not a genuine martyr.<sup>23</sup> As a conclusion to this document, emphasising once more the meaning of the Reconciliation Day, Cardinal Husar postulates that the essence of the celebration is to release oneself from the burden of offences through repentance, forgiveness,

---

22 See No. 346.

23 No. 99, 185.

and the promise not to repeat the past.<sup>24</sup> Reconciliation as a purification of the heart through forgiveness rejuvenates the relations between people: “The Reconciliation Day has to be for us the day of purification, the day of forgiveness because only in that way can we become free and restore the balance in our communication with the fellow men.”<sup>25</sup>

### *Asking forgiveness for negligence and indignation*

Asking forgiveness does not apply exclusively to the situations when people are directly guilty of certain evil deeds. As the pronouncements on the healing of wounds of the Holodomor show, people have to repent and ask forgiveness also for the results of evil in one’s heart. The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church teaches that the Holodomor had destructive influences on the human spirit, and it is for that sort of evil that the people have to ask forgiveness from God: “Instructed by the bitter experience of the past, let us say thanks to the Creator for his kindness and let us ask forgiveness for our indignity and negligence.”<sup>26</sup>

Forgiveness is a cure from the sin of indignation and distrust. In his pastoral letter on the Great Fast of 2014, Sviatoslav Shevchuk considers this as an important element of the regeneration of present-day Ukrainian society especially what concerns hatred and distrust against those

“who have been entrusted with the helm of the nation. It is difficult for us to trust the new leadership today, because we have experienced authorities that enslave, humiliate and kill. Thus, it will take a great effort to overcome this sin. The first step in this direction must be forgiveness. A good opportunity for this is “Forgiveness Sunday” which opens the way to reconciliation with God and the neighbour.”<sup>27</sup>

Further, Ukrainians must not only eradicate their distrust in the new government but share with it the responsibility for the future of the country. Unfortunately, this statement of Shevchuk does not concern appeals to the new state powers themselves that they do not dare follow the sinful steps of their predecessors.

---

24 Ibid.

25 No. 118, 221. Translation from the original source.

26 No. 155, 276. Translation from the original source.

27 No. 2026.



*Formula of mutual forgiveness*

While reading his pronouncements, one easily identifies the clear reconciliation formula of Liubomyr Husar “We forgive and ask for forgiveness.” It is beyond doubt this principle that was promoted by the hierarchy of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in the course of the Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation. Already in his earliest address concerning the homage to the Polish military graves on Lychakiv Cemetery in Lviv, Cardinal Husar claims that the redeeming way out of mutual accusations in violence, wrongdoings, and stereotypes is “to forget the past, to ask and grant forgiveness for the committed and suffered offences.”<sup>28</sup> In his sermon on the occasion of the reconciliation act between the Ukrainian and Polish Catholic bishops, Husar calls “to forgive each other all the trespasses of the past, to ask forgiveness for what we have done and to forgive all the harms done against us.”<sup>29</sup> Both Poles and Ukrainians have inflicted injustices on each other, hence it would be correct when both recognise their faults.<sup>30</sup> Looking for victims and perpetrators will not help because they are on both sides, hence the formula “We forgive and ask for forgiveness.” Both nations possess their vision of the tragic past events, however both have to honestly ask themselves with which eyes they see the past and how they want to see the future.<sup>31</sup> This unconditional vision of forgiveness is pertinent to all the social pronouncements of Cardinal Husar.

The most solemn example of granting and asking forgiveness Husar demonstrates during the visit of John Paul II to Ukraine. As already mentioned above the Greek-Catholic discourse on forgiveness was greatly inspired by the message of John Paul II. In his greeting address upon his arrival at Kyiv International Airport on June 23, 2001, the Pope pronounced distinctive words: “As we ask forgiveness for the errors committed in both the distant and recent past, let us in turn offer forgiveness for the wrongs

---

28 No. 139, 250. Translation from the original source.

29 No. 368, 611. Translation from the original source.

30 Liubomyr Husar, “Zacząć od przebaczenia, czy rozliczeń?” {To begin from forgiveness or making charges?}, interview by Marcin Przeciszewski and Krzysztof Tomasik, *Ekai.pl*, [http://ekai.pl/wydarzenia/temat\\_dnia/x66836/zaczac-od-przebaczenia-czy-rozliczen/?page=1](http://ekai.pl/wydarzenia/temat_dnia/x66836/zaczac-od-przebaczenia-czy-rozliczen/?page=1) (accessed January 15, 2014).

31 Liubomyr Husar, “Chy naspravdi my bazhaiemo ‘yedynospasaiemoho’ pry myrennia?” {Do we really want “saving-in-unity” reconciliation?}, <http://www.pravda.com.ua/columns/2013/05/15/6989805/> (accessed January 15, 2014).

endured.”<sup>32</sup> This formula of forgiveness was answered by Cardinal Liubomyr Husar during the liturgy according to Byzantine rite in Lviv held on June 27, 2001. Husar greeted John Paul in Ukraine, expressed the appreciation of the Pope’s concern about the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, and then pronounced those words:

“Most unfortunately certain sons and daughters of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church consciously and voluntarily did evil things to their neighbours, both to their own people and to others. For all of them, in your presence, Most Holy Father, in the name of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, I ask forgiveness from the Lord, the Creator and Father of us all, and also from those whom we, sons and daughters of this Church, may have wronged in any way. So that the horrible past may not weigh down upon us, and not poison our lives, for our past with all our hearts we forgive those who in any way have wronged us.”<sup>33</sup>

In that quotation Cardinal Husar asked forgiveness from all who were in some way harmed by the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church during history and expressed forgiveness for injustices inflicted upon his Church, thus accentuating the importance of that item on the social agenda of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church.

### *When Churches or nations ask forgiveness*

Remarkably Liubomyr Husar does not ask personal forgiveness but forgiveness on behalf of a group – the faithful of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. Further, he asks and offers forgiveness only in the name of his Church. He does not evoke, for instance, the whole Ukrainian nation. However, the fact that Liubomyr Husar asks forgiveness on behalf of a certain group distinguishes this text from the documents on the Reconciliation Day in Lviv. In these pronouncements asking and granting forgiveness was an assignment of every individual and, hence, personal repentance and reconciliation were emphasised. Here the rhetoric changes, and the Head of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic speaks about the common fault and the need to repent commonly “so that the horrible past may not weigh down upon us, and not poison our lives.” The author postulates that the faithful of his Church committed evil to their neighbours from the own

---

32 Arrival Ceremony. Address of the Holy Father.

33 No. 113, 212. Translation from the original source.

people and other nations. The text does not give more details about the evil that was done and who the victims were.

Husar is convinced that there is no reconciliation without forgiveness; no brotherly relations are possible when one carries in one's heart a burden of harms inflicted upon him or her. This is where forgiveness comes on stage. Forgiveness is a very personal process that makes peace possible between both individuals and groups of people. In the speech on the occasion of the opening of the monument in Pavlokoma, dedicated to the Ukrainians killed by the Polish paramilitary troops in 1945, Husar claims that there are neither individuals nor entire nations that have never acted wrongly with regard to the other. Even the Church as a partly human institution had to recognise that she has sinned and committed faults.<sup>34</sup> That brings us back to the idea of Mykhailo Cherenkov that Ukrainian Churches as institutions should rework their communist past instead of being blinded by the triumphalist Christianity of their nominal faithful.<sup>35</sup> Forgiveness and reconciliation as the obligation on personal level and on the level of the entire nation according to the principle "We forgive and ask for forgiveness" should govern the relations between the people.

Echoing Metropolitan Sheptytskyi and the Balamand Agreement, Myroslav-Ivan Liubachivskyi postulates mutual forgiveness and love as necessary prerequisites towards the dialogue for the unity of the Churches.<sup>36</sup> Forgiveness and reconciliation between the Churches appear in the considered public pronouncements of all the Heads of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. Forgiveness and the spiritual side of reconciliation is mentioned alongside the practical actions, for instance dialogue, respect for each other, ceasing of the media wars, etc. A genuine mutual forgiveness is needed for it will free Churches-opponents from constantly experiencing the historical pain of injustices that took place between them.<sup>37</sup>

---

34 No. 227, 381.

35 See paragraph 4.1.1 of the book.

36 No. 5002, 161.

37 No. 5003, 59 (No. 4000, 128).

*Forgiveness as the obligation of love*

Husar's predecessor, Cardinal Myroslav-Ivan Liubachivskyi, connected forgiveness with love. In his theology love goes beyond justice and truth and paves the way towards forgiveness. Liubachivskyi thinks along the following lines. Christian love is among other things communicated in concrete acts of forgiveness. The well-known Franco-German and especially Polish-German reconciliations illustrate that opinion. Liubachivskyi was convinced that Ukrainians and Russians have to follow that example. For that purpose, in November 1987, he sent a letter to the Moscow Patriarchate that contained this paragraph:

“Following the steps of the Spirit of Christ we reach out the hand of forgiveness, reconciliation and love to the Russian people and the Moscow Patriarchate. As in the case of our reconciliation with the Polish people, we repeat the words of Christ: “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (Mt 6,12). We are all brothers in Christ. Let us respect each other. Let us learn to live together being aware that the same faith of our Saviour unites us.”<sup>38</sup>

To the opponents of the Russian-Ukrainian rapprochement Liubachivskyi explicitly says that the Polish episcopate managed to forgive the Germans who during World War II endeavoured to destroy both the state and the ecclesiastical leadership of the Polish nation.<sup>39</sup> Obviously, one draws here parallels with the Ukrainian situation when Ukraine became part of the Soviet Union after World War II, the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church was destroyed in 1946, and the country suffered for decades under the communist yoke. In that way Cardinal Liubachivskyi emphasises that the Ukrainian-Russian reconciliation is possible and necessary.

---

38 “Marchant dans les pas de l'Esprit du Christ, nous tendons la main du pardon, de la réconciliation et de l'amour au peuple russe et au Patriarcat de Moscou. Comme dans notre réconciliation avec le peuple polonais, nous répétons les paroles du Christ: «Pardonnez comme nous pardonnons». (Mt 6,12). Nous sommes tous frères en Christ. Respectons-nous les uns les autres. Apprenons à vivre ensemble, conscients que nous unit la même foi de notre Sauveur.” (No. 5000, 438).

39 Ibid., 439.

*Accepting forgiveness means recognising faults*

Liubachivskyi was aware of the difficulties of the venture of forgiveness. He reckons that one is able to accept the offered forgiveness only when he/she recognises his/her faults. Commenting on paragraph 20 of the Balamand Agreement on the will to pardon among the Churches and referring to the unanswered declaration on pardon with regard to the Russians from 1987, Cardinal Liubachivskyi explains why his offer of forgiveness was not accepted by the Russian Orthodox Church. To accept forgiveness means to recognise oneself guilty. Without the profession of one's faults the offered forgiveness is offending: "If you forgive someone who is not asking forgiveness, you could, in fact, be offending him, by accusing him of something for which he feels no guilt or responsibility. It is therefore not enough to pardon."<sup>40</sup> Consequently, before asking forgiveness the parties concerned have to recognise their faults and only then "seek forgiveness and ask to be pardoned for whatever wrongs have been done, wilful or unwilling."<sup>41</sup>

*Asking forgiveness as an act of paying honour*

In the teaching of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church asking forgiveness is an act of paying honour. In "Conception of the Ecumenical Position," the Greek-Catholic bishops hold that the lasting reconciliation can be reached only through voluntary decisions, considering the interests of all the Churches, and looking for the solutions that would honour the dignity of every denomination.<sup>42</sup> This is an important remark, since it presupposes that Churches have to refrain from actions that put their opponents in a negative light because this hampers reconciliation. Moreover, the reference to the dignity of a Church also means the readiness to ask forgiveness because while recognising one's own faults against the opponent one shows respect and pays honour.

---

40 No. 5001, 422.

41 Ibid.

42 No. 5003, 55-56 (No. 4000, 121).

*Asking forgiveness as a readiness to assume responsibility*

Asking forgiveness presupposes the willingness to assume responsibility. The regeneration of the Kyivan Church through the reunion of the traditional Ukrainian Churches in one Kyivan Patriarchate would be possible only after the Churches assume responsibility for their wrongdoings in the past and ask forgiveness. The failure of all the previous attempts of the Churches of the Kyivan tradition to come together proves that without the spiritual element of forgiveness not any project of Church unity can successfully be implemented. For that reason, transferring the Metropolitan seat of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church from Lviv to Kyiv, Husar reiterated the plea of asking and offering forgiveness with regard to other branches of the Kyivan Church.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church offered forgiveness to the Orthodox on several occasions. On June 18, 1993 when the Greek-Catholics were impeded by a group of Orthodox faithful to celebrate a liturgy at the Saint Kirill church in Kyiv on the occasion of the solemn blessing of the ground where the future Greek-Catholic cathedral in the capital of Ukraine was to be erected. In the statement that appeared a day after those events, the Greek-Catholic leadership pointed at the violation of human rights by the group of Orthodox and simultaneously, according to God's commandment offered them forgiveness.<sup>44</sup> As sons and daughters of Saint Volodymyr's baptism, both the Orthodox and Greek-Catholics in Ukraine have to learn to live maturely in peace in the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.<sup>45</sup>

The issue of forgiveness between the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church and the Moscow Patriarchate seems to be a bit more complicated. The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church has at least twice openly asked forgiveness from the Russian Orthodox Church for the burdened past between the two Churches. The first event took place in 1987 in a letter of Myroslav-Ivan Liubachivskyi declaring the will to rapprochement with the Russian people. The second explicit official declaration of forgiveness and reconciliation was pronounced on June 27, 2001 in Lviv during the Byzantine-rite liturgy with Pope John Paul II when Liubomyr Husar apologised for the faults of sons and daughters of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. Having themselves offered forgiveness to the Russian Orthodox

---

43 No. 177, 312 (No. 3000, 137).

44 No. 45, 84.

45 *Ibid.*, 84-85.

Church, the Greek-Catholic leadership expected the same step from the Moscow Patriarchate after the establishment of religious freedom in the former Soviet Union.<sup>46</sup> However, the Russian Orthodox Church has never expressed her sorrow or asked pardon for her “acts of the sinful subjugation to the totalitarian regime that traumatises the very nature of the Church.”<sup>47</sup> The message is clear: the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church does not demand from the Russian Orthodox Church something that she has not fulfilled herself. As the Greek-Catholics have asked for pardon, they expect similar steps from the Moscow Patriarchate.

In my reading, the problem with her forgiveness with regard to the Moscow Patriarchate consists in the fact that the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church does not specify for what exactly she asks forgiveness from the Russian Orthodox Church. Perhaps Greek-Catholics apologise for the interconfessional property conflicts. However, the letter of Myroslav-Ivan Liubachivskyi to the Patriarch of Moscow in 1987 was composed before the property struggle began. It would be appropriate for the hierarchy of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church to be more specific concerning the faults that it recognises with regard to the Moscow Patriarchate. Without such a specification the declaration of forgiveness seems arrogant concerning the opponent and looks like an attempt to depict one’s own higher moral disposition. Perhaps because of that some experts<sup>48</sup> say that the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church must apologise for the Brest Union and the violent redistribution of the sacral buildings that also contributed to the split in Kyivan Christianity. Such an apology should help normalise the relations with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Let us now consider this variety of references to forgiveness through the prism of Miroslav Volf and Robert Schreiter.

---

46 No. 217, 362.

47 Ibid. Translation from the original source.

48 See Dymyd, *Reconciliation*; Krokosh, *Catechism*; Arjakovsky, *En attendant*, 500.

## 4.2.2 Miroslav Volf: the centrality of forgiveness

### 4.2.2.1 Forgiveness as a gift and an obligation

Miroslav Volf explored the topic of forgiveness and reconciliation in different ways in his two books *Exclusion and Embrace* and *Free of Charge. Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace*. In the former, the author referred to philosophers and theologians in order to defend his vision. In the latter, he approached forgiveness in a popular style that would be understandable also for non-believers. The combination of the two approaches unfolds a persuasive theology of forgiveness.

According to Miroslav Volf, the contemporary world falsely ascribes to God features according to which a consumerist individualistic society treats its members. People tend to imagine God as a negotiator or Santa Claus, the former points at the exchange mentality, the latter at the mentality of the satisfaction of all, even the most infantile desires. Liubomyr Husar unmasks another false image of God that precludes repentance, that is God the Implacable Judge. Volf aims to deploy common false images of God which negatively influence Christian practices, including forgiveness.

In Volf's opinion, the appropriate image of God is God the Giver. That correlates with the New Testament teaching saying that forgiveness is not a moral obligation but a gift, "the demonstration of divine grace and imitative of the love and grace of God towards humanity."<sup>49</sup> Drawing upon that image Volf suggests analogies with the giving by human beings.<sup>50</sup> God's giving obliges people to faith, gratitude, participation, the availability to become givers themselves, and to granting the most special gift of forgiveness. When people get gifts from God in order to pass them on to others, when they receive God's forgiveness, they are obliged to forgive in their turn. Therefore Miroslav Volf highly praises the book of Brian Zahnd *Unconditional*, which promotes the "argent summon to conversion," "the call of Jesus to radical unconditional forgiveness," "to give up

---

49 Bash, *Forgiveness*, 104.

50 A short article demonstrating Volf's approach of drawing parallels between human and divine giving that derives from the nature of the Triune God: Miroslav Volf, "Being as God Is. Trinity and Generosity," in *God's Life in Trinity*, eds. Miroslav Volf and Michael Welker (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 3-12.



our consumerism and hostility to those who differ from us and practise generous and forgiving grace.”<sup>51</sup>

Volf’s ideas are strongly grounded on the theology of the Apostle Paul. He reiterates Saint Paul’s emphasis on becoming one community after having received the body and blood of Christ: by receiving bread and wine, we receive Christ, and with Christ, we receive ourselves as one body of Christ. The Apostle wrote, explicating the relation between receiving Christ and becoming a community, “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor 10,17).<sup>52</sup> The same element is repeatedly reiterated by Liubomyr Husar and the liturgical act of the Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation is a practical embodiment of that approach.

Through his theology of the cross and resurrection Volf gives us hope that all the efforts of giving and ultimately forgiving are not futile: “... Our gifts and other benefits are not related as causes and effects. They are related as the cross and the resurrection.”<sup>53</sup> The passion of Christ was crowned with the resurrection although it seemed to be a complete failure on the cross. In a similar way, our efforts at giving and forgiving may seem in vain, however, the hope and trust in the Holy Spirit, in his work in the world should support us even in the most desperate moments.

Forgiveness is a way of life, it is a gift. As God has forgiven humanity, people must respond to this act through faith, repentance, and extending forgiveness to others. Thus, similarly to Husar, Volf portrays forgiveness as the obligation of a Christian deriving from God’s forgiveness.

Who is to be forgiven? Which offences can be forgiven? In Volf’s radical interpretation, forgiveness is due to every person and has no limits. Every person deserves forgiveness because of the indiscriminate nature of God’s forgiveness. As God forgives every sin to every person, so we should pass on that gift: “Because Christ died for all, we are called to forgive everyone who offends us, without distinctions and without conditions. That hard work of indiscriminate forgiveness is what those who’ve been made in the likeness of the forgiving God should do.”<sup>54</sup> The Greek-Catholic justification of forgiveness is based on a similar premise.

---

51 Miroslav Volf, introduction to *Unconditional? The Call of Jesus to Radical Forgiveness* {CD-ROM}, by Brian Zahnd (n. p.: Oasis Audio, 2010).

52 Volf, *Free of Charge*, 86.

53 *Ibid.*, 118.

54 *Ibid.*, 180.

In the teaching of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church the theology of forgiveness as a gift is absent. However, the leadership of this Church is not far from such a vision since it postulates that reconciliation is a grace, something freely granted by God or in other words a gift. Consequently, we may plausibly claim that the visions of both the Protestant Volf and the Greek-Catholics are similar. An additional similarity consists in the substantiation of forgiveness through the reference to the mystical body of Christ: all the people, and especially those gathered around the Eucharistic meal, constitute the mystical body of Christ; consequently, they are called to forgiveness as Christ forgives everyone. Forgiveness is a very special gift that people must offer imitating God. Hence, forgiveness is the obligation of a Christian. The theology of Volf with his core idea of imitating God in giving is helpful to substantiate more plausibly the Greek-Catholic obligation of forgiveness.

#### 4.2.2.2 The dynamics of forgiveness

In Volf's understanding, forgiveness means two things: naming and condemning the wrongdoing and granting the wrongdoer a gift of not counting the offences against him or her. However, it is more difficult to forgive than to give because

“We give when we delight in others or others are in need; by giving, we enhance their joy or make up for their lack. We forgive when others have wronged us; by forgiving, we release them from the burden of their wrongdoing. The difference lies in the violation suffered, in the burden of wrongdoing, offence, transgression, debt.”<sup>55</sup>

Therefore, the Christian forgiving could successfully happen only in the triangle between the offender, the wronged, and God. Otherwise, “Take God away, and the foundations of forgiveness become unsteady and may even crumble.”<sup>56</sup>

Volf is very clear on the account that when we forgive, we condemn. Forgiveness means that the victim names the offence, condemns it and after that decides not to count that offence against the wrongdoer. Moreover, “... There's no way to give the gift or forgiveness without the sting of condemnation. We accuse when we forgive, and in doing that, we affirm

---

55 Ibid., 130.

56 Ibid., 131.

the rightful claims of justice.”<sup>57</sup> It is because this element of blame that it is so difficult to accept forgiveness. When in their message regarding the 70th anniversary of Volyn the Greek-Catholic bishops pronounced that they forgive and ask forgiveness, the Polish Catholic bishops refused to accept such a formula because the acceptance would mean the recognition of the blame of the Polish side in the mutual hostilities between the two nations.

Condemnation should be performed in a correct way, which means condemning the evil deed but not the doer. Precisely in that way the Moscow Patriarchate is judged regarding its cooperation in the defeat of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in 1946. Although the Greek-Catholic Church leadership occasionally admits that the Russian Orthodox Church has acted under the pressure of the circumstances, they still consider this Church to be absolutely worthy of rebuilding friendly relations with.

The condemnation, however, does not constitute the core of forgiveness. There are three more elements to it: release from punishment, release from guilt, and slipping the memory of guilt into oblivion. The last point will be treated more in detail in the paragraph on the healing of memory. The release from punishment is for Volf the heart of forgiveness meaning not to press charges against the wrongdoer and forgoing the demand for retribution:<sup>58</sup> “To forgive is to blame, not to punish.”<sup>59</sup> This does not mean that no disciplinary or reforming action can be applied against the wrongdoer. Finally, forgiving presupposes the release of the wrongdoer from guilt as God did with sinful humanity. Forgiveness means lifting the burden of guilt and granting innocence to the wrongdoer.

Miroslav Volf scrutinises both *what* forgiveness is and *how* it happens. He offers the whole chapter of his *Free of Charge* to that issue. The leadership of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, especially Liubomyr Husar, poses the same question of how it is possible to forgive and to reconcile. The bishops answer by pointing at the grace of God and at the necessity of prayer for the success of reconciliation. Volf scrutinises the issue of the possibility of forgiveness in more nuances, for instance, regarding the power to forgive, by comparing God’s and human forgiveness, or by listing the reasons why people cannot forgive. For example, Volf claims that communities which foster the culture of forgiveness and which

---

57 Ibid., 169.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., 170.

make it meaningful prompt their members to forgive. Is Ukrainian society nowadays but another example of the unforgiving culture in which it does not make sense to forgive?<sup>60</sup> Our difficulty to identify ourselves with the real context of the Christian faith, the hollow Christianity, the Christianity of the outer observance, our holding “onto a godliness emptied of substance, to a faith that dribbled away as it was passed on to us,”<sup>61</sup> all account for the unforgiving culture of our times including the perception of the faith.

Moreover, the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church should add the element of the eschatological completion of forgiveness to her official teaching. The Church leadership has always emphasised that reconciliation and forgiveness happen with God’s help trying to encourage the faithful to step on the road to forgiveness. However, forgiveness does not simply happen by the grace of God; it will be completed only in the world to come, as Volf postulates. This is a good argument against the sceptics of forgiveness.

We have both the right and power to forgive through the presence of Christ in our souls who has already forgiven us.<sup>62</sup> This union with God, also mentioned by Cardinal Husar, helps surmount the inner resistance to forgiveness and reconciliation. Thus, both authors share the opinion that forgiveness is ultimately the work of God, expressing a great reliance on God’s grace. This leads to the posture of humbleness in forgiveness. People only echo God’s forgiveness. It is God, who knows the real extent of the wrongdoing, but he still forgives “and we join God in forgiving. The consequence for us should be humility – willingness to admit that we may have gotten the wrongdoing wrong, willingness to revise our judgement, willingness to retract it.”<sup>63</sup>

Miroslav Volf is more concrete about forgiveness than the bishops of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. They often use forgiveness and reconciliation interchanged while for Volf forgiveness is clearly only a step to reconciliation. Additionally, the core of reconciliation for Volf consists in forgiveness; he dedicates most of his attention to that issue as well as to the question of memory. The picture of forgiveness in the case of the Greek-Catholic Church is somehow blurred. Hence, it would be de-

---

60 Ibid., 211.

61 Ibid., 224.

62 Ibid., 200.

63 Ibid., 211.

sirable for the leadership of that Church to make their teaching on forgiveness more transparent and definite. The Greek-Catholic bishops derive the duty of forgiveness from the love of God. Volf puts a somewhat different accent. The obligation of forgiveness derives from God's forgiveness of people and the subsequent duty to pass forgiveness on to one's neighbours. The two stances are commensurable because ultimately God's forgiveness is grounded on His love to people.

Both Greek-Catholic bishops and Miroslav Volf emphasise the individual asking for forgiveness. The social reconciliation is not so much elaborated by Volf. It is remarkable that Volf does not write about a nation apologising to another nation, although his interest in forgiveness flows from his experience of the identity-driven Balkan wars. He cares about individual forgiveness, about personal relations, and the purification of memory. Because only a concrete person can forgive in Volf's interpretation, this author is interested in the individual personal growth, in the unfolding of the relation between God and the individual and consequently between individuals themselves. For Greek-Catholics individual forgiveness leads to a reconciled society. Even the Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation is considered to be a matter of every individual repenting of his faults and asking forgiveness. In principle, the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church does not draw a distinction between individual and social reconciliation: reconciliation is a matter of the spiritual transfiguration of every single person. A reconstructed society will be born from the renewed person.

Miroslav Volf does not mention a reciprocal forgiveness formula "We forgive and ask for forgiveness." Instead, both theologies are clear concerning the need to accept the offered forgiveness. It must be accepted through the recognition of the faults by the wrongdoer and the willingness to assume responsibility for the evil deeds, which is equally emphasised in both theologies.

#### 4.2.2.3 Making space for the other

This element Miroslav Volf places between forgiveness and reconciliation. Only forgiveness does not suffice for reconciliation because although it heals the wounds, it still leaves a distance between the estranged sides. Forgiveness means reaching the stance of neutrality or disinterest for the other whereas reconciliation entails relationship. When we think about the all-Ukrainian reconciliation, the national unity, we cannot remain on the

level of the purification of memory or forgiveness. When a people should function as a nation, in unity, and contribute to the flourishing of the state, they must learn to accommodate each other. Sheer indifference hinders that aim. Volf unfolds three images – Christ on the cross, the Trinity, and the Eucharist – which illustrate the meaning and significance of making space for the other.

The image of the crucified Christ with his arms open on the cross manifests God’s creating a space for sinful humanity to come in. The divine reality of the Trinity (remember that Volf draws implications of the relations of the Divine Persons in the Trinity for how human beings should encounter each other) is often presented as giving of the self and receiving of the other in perichoresis or “mutual interiority.”<sup>64</sup> Finally, the symbol of the Eucharist is perhaps the most meaningful image to describe the space for the other. In Volf’s words, “Having been embraced by God, we must make space for others in ourselves and invite them in – even our enemies. This is what we enact as we celebrate the Eucharist.”<sup>65</sup> And further, “In the Eucharist we celebrate the giving of the self to the other and the receiving of the other into the self that the triune God has undertaken in the passion of Christ and that we are called and empowered to live such giving and receiving out in a conflict-ridden world.”<sup>66</sup> In the eschatological new creation, people will be gathered in a perfect embrace. Before that, however, it is in the Eucharist that this eschatological reality is expressed the best. Thus, space for the other signifies the openness, the desire to embrace each other as members of the mystical body of Christ. This powerful image is often referred to in the theology of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church and on that point that both theologies correspond.

In his speech at the meeting of the international group “Reconciliation in Europe” on October 6, 2012, Bohdan Dziurakh, the bishop of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, in the terms of Miroslav Volf argued that reconciliation is the fruit of love that includes three elements: to see the other as one’s neighbour, to repent oneself instead of demanding forgiveness from the other, and to think about how to change the future instead of the past.<sup>67</sup> At this conference two remarkable projects were pre-

---

64 Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace* (1996), 127-128.

65 *Ibid.*, 129.

66 *Ibid.*, 130.

67 “6.10.2012 roku Bozhoho. Konferentsiia “Mystetstvo spivinsnuvannia khrystyian. Uroky istorii i vyklyky siohodennia” {6.10.2012. Conference “The art of co-existence between Christians. Lessons of history and present challenges”}, <http://>

sented: the joint Ukrainian martyrology and the idea of the creation of a joint commission that would develop an ecumenical manual that would re-interpret contesting pages of the history of Christianity in Ukraine. Such projects testify the readiness to welcome the other and to redefine the own identity in a way that gives space for the different other.

#### 4.2.3 Robert Schreiter: forgiveness as a grace to attend to the moral failures of the past

After truth-telling and justice, the last element of the process of coming to terms with the past is forgiveness. Schreiter points out that forgiveness is divine and human. The former is the expression of God's love and the latter "is a decision by a victim to no longer be controlled by the effects of past deeds done, and to choose freely for a different kind of future."<sup>68</sup> Forgiveness changes the attitude to the past which is not forgotten but remembered in a different way. From a Christian perspective forgiveness is considered in a horizon of the infinite love of God. Liubomyr Husar reminds one of that when he calls the faithful to change the picture of God from a vindictive Judge to a merciful loving Father. When God as a Father forgives, people should extend their forgiveness to the other: "When human beings accept God's love, they are able to experience this greater union {with God} and also come to see the extent of their wrongdoing. They are able to come to repentance."<sup>69</sup>

For Schreiter forgiveness is not an emotion but a conscious act, a decision for a different future. Forgiveness is also a process aiming at freeing oneself from the power of the past.<sup>70</sup> The decision to forgive is the point where divine and human forgiveness intersect: "The ability to decide to forgive comes from the restoration of humanity that is the grace of reconciliation."<sup>71</sup> Having experienced the grace of reconciliation with God, people offer their forgiveness to the fellow human beings as an extension

---

ugcc-yahta.org.ua/2012/10/05/6102012-r-b-konferentsiya-mystetstvo-spivisnu  
vannya-hrystyian-uroky-istoriji-i-vyklyky-sohodennya/ (accessed January 16,  
2014).

68 Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation*, 124.

69 *Ibid.*, 57.

70 *Ibid.*, 58.

71 *Ibid.*, 61.

of the grace received by them. Ultimately, only God is the source of forgiveness and only He can forgive sins.<sup>72</sup>

Similarly to individual forgiveness, social forgiveness has to do with “giving up resentment and repairing, in some measures, relationship... Forgiveness is about the transformation of relationships.”<sup>73</sup> Robert Schreiter emphasises that society as such cannot forgive. For him forgiveness is a moral-ethical category that touches upon only a concrete person, forgiveness is a personal act. Hence, he criticises the ideas of political forgiveness of Donald Shriver by claiming that as societies cannot be empathetic, they cannot forgive either.<sup>74</sup> Consequently, this scholar accepts only pardon or amnesty on the societal level. Survivors or future generations who have not immediately experienced evil can forgive only in the sense “that they decide to come free of the effect that another’s killing has on *them*, but they cannot forgive on another’s behalf.”<sup>75</sup> In that way we may explain the meaning of the plea for forgiveness expressed by the leadership of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church on behalf of the faithful to other nations, peoples, or Churches. When Husar asked for forgiveness from the Polish nation, he apologised for the resentment that Ukrainians may feel towards Poles. But Husar could not ask pardon for the killing of Poles in Volyn because contemporary Ukrainians did not commit them. That gesture of asking forgiveness is a means of setting moral standards on which the relations between both nations have to be constructed in the future.

Of particular interest for our research is Schreiter’s understanding of social forgiveness. When the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church apologised before Poles, Russians or when she asked forgiveness from every nation, community, or Church for any wrongdoings committed by her faithful, this Church demonstrated examples of social forgiveness. What is the essence of such acts? Forgiveness between groups consists of three stages: acknowledgement, apology, and atonement. Acknowledgement is the recognition of the responsibility of a state, its predecessor, or a group for an act of violence. Through the ritual act of apology, a group aims at reframing the past in order to make the new relationship possible.<sup>76</sup> Apol-

---

72 Ibid., 62.

73 Schreiter, *A Practical Theology*, 392.

74 Schreiter, *The Ministry of Reconciliation*, 124.

75 Ibid., 59.

76 Schreiter, *A Practical Theology*, 392.



ogy can be engraved by erecting monuments or the yearly observation of memorial rituals. The final element, atonement, does not necessarily presuppose a legal liability for the past, but it recognises “a moral liability in that it attests to the moral failure in the past.”<sup>77</sup> The thought of Schreiter intersects here with the theology of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. The studied texts on the Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation show that the bishops of that Church reconsidered the past between both nations in moral terms in order to determine where people failed as Christians.

### 4.3 On the challenges of justice

#### 4.3.1 The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church: on the deficit of justice

Which justice?

There are no theories of reconciliation that do not mention justice. In this paragraph I will elaborate on the meaning of justice as it appears in the analysed official pronouncements of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. How often is justice mentioned? What place does it have in the process of reconciliation? And finally, what kind of justice is that?

The first impression that arises after having read the documents of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church is that justice is not elaborated well, its meaning is not unilateral, and in the majority of the documents this term does not appear at all. For instance, we read: “The peaceful life can be secured only through justice, the orientation of every individual not to do evil, to love one’s neighbour.”<sup>78</sup> This fits well into Husar’s spiritual way to reconciliation. For him, justice understood in legal terms seems to be extraneous to the process of the purification of one’s heart. Husar’s vision of justice is future-oriented, derives from love for one’s neighbour, and means avoiding doing evil. The issue of the retribution or determination of the punishment for the evil committed in the past is not addressed. In many texts, the term justice is not followed by any further elaboration.

In a number of the studied pronouncements the Greek-Catholic leadership pleads for historical justice. Myroslav-Ivan Liubachivskyi does not mention that term in his statement on the legalisation of his Church and

---

77 Ibid.

78 No. 346, 579; No. 128, 240. Translation from the original source.

the perturbations of the return of the Saint George Cathedral in Lviv to the Greek-Catholics. However, he is convinced that the claims of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church on the Saint George Cathedral as well as 4,000 other sacral buildings are justified because those were illegally given over to the Russian Orthodox Church in 1946.<sup>79</sup> Recently legalised, the Greek-Catholics raised demands for their former property including the cathedral. The return of sacral buildings is considered by Cardinal Liubachivskyi to be the establishment of historical justice. It could be painful for the Russian Orthodox Church but it is necessary for the peaceful coexistence of both Churches in Ukraine.

In the opinion of her leadership, another demand for historical justice is the rehabilitation of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church that was asked in 2006 in a letter of the Synod of Bishops to the President of Ukraine Victor Yushchenko. In that message, the Soviet regime is accused of the forced liquidation of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church that was “one of the last strongholds of resistance to the communist tyranny and the preservation of the Ukrainian national consciousness.”<sup>80</sup> The fate of the Greek-Catholics is compared with the cruellest crimes of the communist regime. Among them are the Holodomor of 1932-1933, the deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944, or the forced resettlement of Ukrainians from their ethnic lands at the result of the Operation Vistula of 1947.<sup>81</sup> This comparison is certainly eloquent because in the history of Ukraine the above-listed events belong to the most tragic ones and the demands for historical justice sound especially loud.

Liubomyr Husar warns that sometimes searching justice can lead to retaliation. On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Lviv Pseudo-Synod, he wrote that the memory of the liquidation of the Greek-Catholic Church teaches some lessons about the way to unity in the future. One of them makes it obvious that the unity between the Churches cannot be reached by means of force.<sup>82</sup> The side that has suffered searches for justice and is prone to fall prey to the desire of retaliation whereas the wrongdoers who do not want to recognise their fault cannot realise the truth and purify their consciences.<sup>83</sup> Husar warns of falling prey to vengeance in the

---

79 No. 15, 26.

80 No. 213, 354. Translation from the original source.

81 *Ibid.*, 354-355.

82 No. 219, 368-369.

83 *Ibid.*, 369.

search for justice as well as of searching the unity of the Church by means of force.

Another dimension of justice is connected with memory as it was the case in the Great Famine of 1932-1933. The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church greatly advocated the recognition of the Holodomor as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people because among other things, such an act would be “the just evaluation of the events of the past.” Thus, justice means the disclosure and acknowledgment of the truth. The recognition of the Holodomor as an act of genocide is a way of telling the truth about the past.

God’s order of peace is grounded on truth, justice, freedom, and love.<sup>84</sup> Justice plays a particularly important role. Justice does not have to be vindictive, but open to and oriented towards forgiveness because “as peace is not possible without justice, so is justice not possible without reconciliation and forgiveness.”<sup>85</sup> The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic bishops refer here to what is known as restorative justice in the understanding of Miroslav Volf. Speaking about justice in case of dealing with the memories of World War II, the bishops call to pay homage to all its victims, whether the soldiers of the Red Army or the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, and to strive for national reconciliation by praying for all those who fought for the independence of Ukraine.<sup>86</sup>

The hints at social justice are equally present in the teaching of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. Cardinal Husar is convinced that all too often we talk about peace but neglect justice, human rights and human dignity.<sup>87</sup> He suggests counteracting such tendencies with the programme of “the holy peace,” a notion opposed to “the holy war.” “The holy peace” practically means the preservation of the dignity of every human being that begins in the hearts of individuals to be later extended to families and the whole society. The evil has to be fought with the good.<sup>88</sup> The notion of the “holy peace” contains the seeds of the encompassing vision of justice, yet its embodiment is again placed on the personal level.

In his address on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the independence of Ukraine, Sviatoslav Shevchuk elaborated on state and social jus-

---

84 No. 2008.

85 Ibid. Translation from the original source.

86 Ibid.

87 No. 128, 239.

88 Ibid.

tice. This message is interesting for my research because it belongs to those rather rare texts on reconciliation which convey the vision of social justice. Shevchuk postulates that justice being born from love demands respect for another person notwithstanding his or her origin, political convictions or religion which consequently means that “justice calls us to the non-acceptance of extremism, violence, and disregard of social peace.”<sup>89</sup> Then Shevchuk gives examples of what justice practically means. It is about the task of the state authorities to ensure the promotion of human rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution of Ukraine, in particular the right to education and social security, the right to work and health care.<sup>90</sup> The state has to ensure favourable conditions for the private initiative and economic entrepreneurship of its citizens, an impartial election law and political activity. The right to religious freedom and an equally just attitude of the state authorities to all the Churches and religious organisations officially registered on the Ukrainian territory also belong to the promotion of justice.<sup>91</sup>

The idea of justice as a precondition of social peace bears consequences for the practical success of reconciliation. Reconciliation cannot be mistakenly perceived merely as a programme of spiritual renewal. It should have a pragmatic basis where among other things economic interests and the well-being of conflicting parties are essential. The rivalling Ukrainian political parties try to draw the attention of the citizens away from their failed economic politics to the debate on historically controversial figures like Stepan Bandera and so on. The governing Party of the Regions could not boast any significant and successful project of the modernisation of Ukraine. However, before the parliamentary elections of 2012 it managed to pass a new law on the state languages in Ukraine that created a perfect ground for the outburst of the inter-state tensions between the east and west of Ukraine. People lacking perspectives in the future will easily fall prey to the manipulative manoeuvres of the political class.

Sviatoslav Shevchuk claims that justice includes the right to freely develop the Ukrainian language and culture, the restoration of historical truth, and the counteraction of Ukrainophobia.<sup>92</sup> It evokes a question about the kind of justice that should be implemented in a concrete moment of

---

89 No. 2011. Translation from the original source.

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

history. When it is about the practical realisation of that statement of Shevchuk, several problems may occur. To develop the Ukrainian language is a demand for justice, but will that also bring about the reconciliation between the east and west of the country where different languages predominate in the daily use? Similarly, the renewal of the historical memory of the Ukrainian nation can also bring about new divisions. In modern Ukrainian society such questions as language and historical memory should always be treated keeping in mind the need of social cohesion in the country. The strong Ukrainisation politics of President Viktor Yushchenko in 2005-2010 caused polarisation in Ukrainian society<sup>93</sup> as it was not accepted by the citizens of the country whose identity is constructed on the basis of the Soviet past and the closeness to contemporary Russia. The election of Viktor Yanukovych in 2010 to the office of President of Ukraine signalled a turn in the opposite direction. Because identities indeed significantly vary in Ukraine, it is evident that the efforts to adduce a particular set of national narratives by force will fail. In that regard, Yaroslav Hrytsak's appeals to introduce a ban on historical discussions on the political level in present-day Ukraine is a justifiable solution.<sup>94</sup> Looking for purely historical justice can even complicate the situation. It seems to be more plausible to abandon historical discussions for the moment and to concentrate on something else, to attempt to unite the nation not on the basis of history but around, for instance, the way of a successful future modernisation of Ukraine.

The Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation also points at that demand for sensibility to the issues of justice. In the letter on the Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation between the Catholic Churches of Ukraine and Poland in 2005 reconciliation was emphasised, whilst in the joint letter on the Volyn anniversary in 2013 the issue of historical justice took prevalence. In 2005 the bishops underlined the Christian duty of Poles and Ukrainians to reconcile. In 2013 the Polish episcopate longed to gain the recognition of the guilt of the Ukrainian side in the mass killings of Poles in 1943 to the extent that they were ready to break off the reconciliation process between

---

93 Yaroslav Hrytsak, "Pamiat i natsiia" {Memory and nation}, in *Strasti za natsionalizmom: stara istoriia na novyi lad* (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2011), 270-271.

94 Yaroslav Hrytsak, "Pamiat" {Memory}, in *Zhyttia, smert ta inshi nepryiemnosti*, 3rd ed. (Kyiv: Hrani-T, 2011), 77; Yaroslav Hrytsak, "Nil Desperandum," in *Zhyttia, smert ta inshi nepryiemnosti*, 3rd ed. (Kyiv: Hrani-T, 2011), 233.

both peoples. Therefore, it is essential to constantly identify what reconciliation is and which justice is expected at that given moment.

Concluding, having studied the documents I observe that in general justice does not appear often in the teaching of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church on reconciliation. In the texts where it does appear, three principal meanings are rendered to that term. First, the texts speak about historical justice as the establishment of the historical truth and the rehabilitation of victims. Second, justice derives from love for one's neighbour and means avoiding doing evil. And finally, social justice as a precondition for social peace is addressed even though not further expounded. The importance of this assignment I will illustrate next.

### Bringing about changes in Ukrainian society

Myroslav Marynovych has once characterised Cardinal Husar as a person "that precedes his time and suggests to Ukrainians the formulas which they only prepare themselves to perceive."<sup>95</sup> Liubomyr Husar sometimes brings very personal and unexpected receipts for making changes in the world. For instance, he suggests that remnants of communism can be overcome with a smile, when one helps one's neighbour and grants him/her a smile because communism made people unable to laugh.<sup>96</sup> Big changes can be accomplished when people start from small daily steps. The Polish "Gazeta Wyborcza" called Liubomyr Husar "the hierarch of reconciliation."<sup>97</sup>

One of such proposals is Husar's approach to the Church contribution towards the completion of the democratic transition in Ukraine. What I have written so far proves that reconciliation must be considered in this framework: the requirement of social reconciliation in Ukraine is coupled

---

95 Myroslav Marynovych, "Vstupne slovo do interviu z Blazhennishym Liubomyrom" {The word of introduction to the interview with His Beatitude Liubomyr}, in *Vybrane. T. 5, Peredmovy ta retsenzii. Vystupy y interviu* (Lviv: Ukrainian Catholic University, 2010), 96. Translation from the original source.

96 "Blazhennishyi Liubomyr Husar vvazhaie, shcho komunizm mozna podolaty usmishkoiu" {His Beatitude Liubomyr Husar believes that communism can be defeated by a smile}, [http://www.ugcc.org.ua/news\\_single.0.html?&tx\\_ttnews%5btt\\_news%5d=6792&cHash=06394c5e294baf9a6724b9a952541c77](http://www.ugcc.org.ua/news_single.0.html?&tx_ttnews%5btt_news%5d=6792&cHash=06394c5e294baf9a6724b9a952541c77) (accessed January 11, 2014).

97 Andrzej M. Eliaz, "Daleko vid Moskvyy" {Far from Moscow}, <http://zgroup.com.ua/article.php?articleid=4693> (accessed January 22, 2014).

with fostering the development of the country. Hence, I consider that the Greek-Catholic discourse on reconciliation could objectively be placed in the major project of the transformation of society. Additional to fulfilling the Gospel commandment “May all be one,” the aim of the reconciliation between the Churches in Ukraine or of the all-Ukrainian reconciliation consists in nurturing the modernisation and transformation of the country. Based on those considerations, in that place when we speak about justice I consider it appropriate to delineate briefly the dynamics of the social transformation of Ukraine in the opinion of the leadership of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. The most illustrative ideas come from the former Head of the Church, Cardinal Husar. Even after his demission in February 2011, Husar continues to be actively engaged in the public discourse in Ukraine, having produced at that time, for instance, several audio-books<sup>98</sup> on where to search for Christian solutions to contemporary problems of Ukrainian society. My particular interest concerns the sources of the transformation of the country. A Mennonite Lederach and a Greek-Catholic Husar share a lot about the centrality of relationships and grounding social changes on the basic and mid-level. I will verify this claim in what follows.

Husar is strongly convinced that the key to any social transformation is to be found in the transfiguration of the human person which echoes the argument of Arnold Toynbee and Victor Yelenskyi that “the Churches accomplish social transformation through the ‘progress of individual human souls.’”<sup>99</sup> On January 24, 2014, commenting on the scene of the humiliation of one of the protesters on the EuroMaidan, Liubomyr Husar said that during the last years there were a lot of discussions about politics, economics, and the organisation of social life. The same attention should be

---

98 The trilogy *Three Roads*: Liubomyr Husar, *Doroha do sebe* {Road to oneself} {CD-ROM} (Lviv: Svichado, 2009);

Liubomyr Husar, *Doroha do blyzhnoho* {Road to one’s neighbour} {CD-ROM} (Lviv: Svichado, 2010);

Liubomyr Husar, *Doroha do Boha* {Road to God} {CD-ROM} (Lviv: Svichado, 2011).

The trilogy *Society*: Liubomyr Husar, *Suspilstvo i vlada* {Society and authority} {CD-ROM} (Lviv: Svichado, 2011);

Liubomyr Husar, *Suspilstvo i biznes* {Society and business} {CD-ROM} (Lviv: Svichado, 2011);

Liubomyr Husar, *Suspilstvo i zakon* {Society and law} {CD-ROM} (Lviv: Svichado, 2013).

99 Yelenskyi, Ukraine. Church and State, in *Church-State Relations*, 146.

paid to the domain of personal and public morality, especially to the very low public morality of the state officials.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, commenting on the situation of the EuroMaidan in January 2014, the Greek-Catholic bishops warned the Ukrainian government of the implementation of violence and called people “to keep God’s commandments, do none evil, remain in peace and goodness. We ask you to continue praying together in communities (parishes, monasteries, families) and individually for Ukraine. And we announce a period of fasting in all our eparchies and exarchates in Ukraine.”<sup>101</sup> Sviatoslav Shevchuk claims that God’s commandments suggest a solution to the contemporary Ukrainian crisis: “If you live in an environment where everyone tells lies, speak the truth and your words will be revolutionary! If you live in a country, where people steal, do not steal, even if it means that it leads you to some material discomfort! In such a way you will lay a treasure for your own life and the life of your environment, which is not measured in money equivalents.”<sup>102</sup> In short, according to the teaching of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, the transformation in society begins by changing the ethical values of its individuals.

The person can be influenced by education. For instance, in Husar’s opinion, one cannot eradicate corruption in Ukraine merely by administrative means or by the reform of law. In order to fight that problem, the new generation has to be brought up on a solid moral basis; young people have to interiorise certain moral values.<sup>103</sup> The concentration of the state reforms on economics will not improve the situation when irresponsible politicians hold power.<sup>104</sup> Husar is convinced that the excessive belief in

100 Liubomyr Husar, “Do choho my dokotylysia?” {Where have we ended up?}, <http://www.pravda.com.ua/columns/2014/01/24/7011184/> (accessed January 25, 2014).

101 “An Appeal from Greek-Catholic Bishops in Ukraine concerning the Socio-Political Situation in the Country,” [http://news.ugcc.org.ua/en/news/an\\_appeal\\_from\\_greekcatholic\\_bishops\\_in\\_ukraine\\_concerning\\_the\\_sociopolitical\\_situation\\_in\\_the\\_country\\_69090.html](http://news.ugcc.org.ua/en/news/an_appeal_from_greekcatholic_bishops_in_ukraine_concerning_the_sociopolitical_situation_in_the_country_69090.html) (accessed February 10, 2014).

102 “The Head of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church: ‘In Order to Overcome an Opponent in a Peaceful Manner, It Is Necessary to Be Spiritually and Morally Higher Than Him,’” [http://news.ugcc.org.ua/en/news/in\\_order\\_to\\_overcome\\_an\\_opponent\\_in\\_a\\_peaceful\\_manner\\_it\\_is\\_necessary\\_to\\_be\\_spiritually\\_and\\_morally\\_higher\\_than\\_him\\_ugcc\\_head\\_69058.html](http://news.ugcc.org.ua/en/news/in_order_to_overcome_an_opponent_in_a_peaceful_manner_it_is_necessary_to_be_spiritually_and_morally_higher_than_him_ugcc_head_69058.html) (accessed February 10, 2014).

103 Kateryna Shchotkina, ed., *Try dorohy: besidy Blazhennishoho Liubomyra Husara z zhurnalistamy* {Three roads. Conversations of His Beatitude Liubomyr Husar with journalists} (Lviv: Drukarski Kunshty, 2013), 15.

104 For a good analysis of the ethics of responsibility of Liubomyr Husar on the basis of his audio-books *Society and Business* and *Society and Politics*, see Yuri



the saving power of economics cannot be a solution to the current crisis in the country.<sup>105</sup> Fighting corruption is a spiritual programme and not a question of economic reforms.<sup>106</sup> Concerning the 1025th anniversary of the baptism of the Kyivan Rus in 2013, Liubomyr Husar plainly stated that the essence of the celebration is not the official ostentatious feats but the decision to behave in personal, family, and social life according to the Christian principles.<sup>107</sup> As usual, Cardinal Husar distinguishes the personal element of Christianity for social changes. As an illustration of this spiritual approach to social changes serves a letter “On Bribery in Our Country and How to Fight It.” Lent address of the Bishops of the Major Archbishopric of Kyiv-Halych of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church to the faithful.” The authors write that the first step to overcoming bribery leads through the establishment of priorities in one’s life. External juridical or any other changes will be of little help if people do not change their hearts. To clean one’s own heart from the love for money is a difficult process; the aim can be reached with the help of God.<sup>108</sup>

The erasure of the border between good and evil, the truth and the lie, and the general moral decline account for the current state of crisis in all the spheres of social life.<sup>109</sup> The problems deriving from the cultural differences between the east and west of Ukraine also originate in the deplorable moral state of society. Husar believes that the suspicion between the east and the west is fuelled by politicians themselves in order to serve their narrow interests. In his opinion, everyone who lives in Ukraine, claims belonging to the country, and wishes it well, is welcomed, notwithstanding

---

Chornomorets, “Sotsialne vchennia Patriarkha Liubomyra Husara” {Social teaching of Patriarch Liubomyr Husar}, <http://theology.in.ua/ua/bp/theologia/practical/social/47049/> (accessed January 14, 2014).

105 Shchotkina, Three roads, 16.

106 Ibid.

107 Liubomyr Husar, “Yak vidznachyty Khreshchennia Kyivskoi Rusi?” {How to celebrate the baptism of the Kyivan Rus?}, <http://www.pravda.com.ua/columns/2013/07/23/6994757/> (accessed January 20, 2014).

108 “Pro yavyshche khabarnytstva v nashii kraini ta yak yoho poboriuvaty:” Zvernennia do virnykh na Velykiy pist yepyskopiv Kyievo-Halytskoho Verkhovnoho Arkhyepyskopstva Ukrainskoi Hreko-Katolytskoi Tserkvy” {“On bribery in our country and how to fight it.” Lent address of the Bishops of the Major Archbishopric of Kyiv-Halych of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church to the faithful}, in *Sotsialno zorientovani dokumenty Ukrainskoi Hreko-Katolytskoi Tserkvy (1989-2008)*, ed. Lesia Kovalenko (Lviv: Ukrainian Catholic University, 2008, 445).

109 Ibid., 38.

his or her origins.<sup>110</sup> Russians, Crimea Tatars, Poles, and other nationalities are worthy citizens of Ukraine.

In other words, Liubomyr Husar envisions the modernisation of Ukrainian society first of all in the transformation of the person and not in the reforms of institutions. The second will happen only after the first has taken place. This approach concerns every sphere of human life, private as well as social. Cardinal Husar is convinced that Ukrainian society is sick nowadays,<sup>111</sup> and because the roots of the problems of the development of the country are of a moral nature, the cure should be spiritual as well. Only education understood in the broader sense is a cure against every social disease.<sup>112</sup> Husar's approach to reconciliation is but another expression of his vision of the spiritual transformation of the world.

At the same time, I give credit to the idea of Yurii Chornomorets that although Husar favours changing the world by the power of the transformed human soul, his approach cannot be called purely down-to-the-top as it is the case with Myroslav Marynovych. Only new technologies like a civil society without leaders, the renewal of the entire political establishment or the cessation of giving bribes will not change the society.<sup>113</sup> Liubomyr Husar places a particular responsibility on politicians because they can perform more than a regular Ukrainian.<sup>114</sup> The moral choice of every citizen does not only bear upon his personal fate but on the fate of the entire nation,<sup>115</sup> however, the repercussions of the choices made by immoral politicians can have grave consequences for the well-being of the whole state.

Husar is realistic concerning the time necessary for the real transformation of Ukraine. Reminding one of the 40-year period of the Israeli people wandering with Moses in the desert, the author thinks that the whole generation of contemporary Ukrainians will have to pass away before the positive changes take place.<sup>116</sup> That new generation will be capable of bringing about changes because they will manage to avoid the influence of their parents and grandparents with their dysfunctional patterns

---

110 Shchotkina, *Three roads*, 70.

111 *Ibid.*, 18.

112 *Ibid.*, 44.

113 Chornomorets, *The ideal of Christian Ukraine*.

114 Chornomorets, *Social teaching*.

115 *Ibid.*

116 Shchotkina, *Three roads*, 32.

of social life. Reconciliation in society takes time as well; it is a long-term complicated project.

Husar pays so much attention to the preservation and popularisation of the memory of the Holodomor because he believes that “the identity of the nation is built on failures, defeats.”<sup>117</sup> The occupants who reigned in Ukraine during the last centuries endeavoured to eradicate the real Ukrainian identity; therefore, it is very important to regenerate it now in independent Ukraine. The gravest moral harm suffered by Ukrainians under the foreign rule is the loss of the sense of responsibility.<sup>118</sup> The venture of reconciliation and forgiveness aims at assuming an obligation for the past and in this way helps restore that lost capability of Ukrainians.

The rhetoric of Liubomyr Husar is reiterated in the pronouncements of the current Head of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. At the end of 2013, which brought the mass demonstrations in favour of the pro-European future of Ukraine, Sviatoslav Shevchuk argued that people have to change themselves before they can change their country:

“We have to feel personal responsibility for the fate of our nation and its country, to feel in a new way our own dignity and strength, because the renewal of our nation can happen only through the renewal of every Ukrainian by our efforts and by the grace of the Holy Spirit. The renewed respect for the dignity of the human person, respect for everyone as a free human being, created in the image and likeness of God is the foundation on which the country that is worthy of this person is built.”<sup>119</sup>

Interestingly enough, the ethics of responsibility for the future of the country, the ethical responsibility of everyone in his or her place, are also present in Orthodox thought in Ukraine. For instance, the Patriarch Filaret of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate corroborates that corruption (“the biggest evil that destroys all the achievements of Ukraine”)<sup>120</sup> begins in the head. Therefore, if corrupted politicians do not detect this evil in their hearts and society will not learn to discern its dif-

---

117 Ibid., 33. Translation from the original source.

118 Ibid., 36.

119 “Slovo Blazhennishoho Sviatoslava na zavershennia 2013 roku” {Word of His Beatitude Sviatoslav for the end of 2013}, <http://www.cerkiew.olsztyn.pl/2014/01/slovo-blazhennishogo-svyatoslava-na-zavershennya-2013-roku/> (accessed January 16, 2014). Translation from the original source.

120 “Poslannia Patriarkha Filareta Prezydentu Ukrainy Viktoru Yanukovychu ‘Ukraini potribne porozuminnia!’” {Message of Patriarch Filaret to the President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovych “Ukraine needs reconciliation!”}, <http://www.cerkva.info/en/messages/1819-lyst-presidentu.html> (accessed January 11, 2014).

ferent forms, even the best code of laws will not help.<sup>121</sup> Social transformation in the thought of both Liubomyr Husar and the Patriarch Filaret almost literally correspond to the words of Gennadios Limouris concerning the character of the Orthodox peacebuilding: justice and peace are “much more a question of an inner approach in the mode of sanctification and uplifting of the human person upon which any social, political or cultural changes depends.”<sup>122</sup> In her presentation during the 5th Ecumenical Social Week in Ukraine, Heleen Zorgdrager concluded that the best contribution of the Church to social progress consisted in encouraging the faithful to act as “free, responsible, moral subjects.”<sup>123</sup> The desired changes in the country will only then take place, when the human person regenerates in her dignity. Hence, indeed the human heart is the locus of reconciliation and any other social change. In that sense, the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church pursues a very spiritual approach to reconciliation with its emphasis on the spiritual regeneration of the individual that will become the source of the transformation of the world: “There is an understanding that through spirituality and personal transformation the individual can attain that inner peace which will bring peace in the world.”<sup>124</sup> That feature is one of the core ideas of Greek-Catholic theology in general, including the issue of reconciliation.

#### Some incitements for discussion

For every country in transition the demands for justice are of paramount importance. The Ukrainian situation equally demonstrates the high priority of the issues of justice and transformation. Mykhailo Dymyd argued that “society that lives in want does not have a need for the higher values of

---

121 Ibid.

122 Vassilios Giultsis, “An Ethical Approach to Justice and Peace,” in *Justice and Peace and the Integrity of Creation. Insights from Orthodoxy*, ed. Gennadios Limouris (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990), 57.

123 Heleen Zorgdrager, “Moralnyi opikun chy kenotychnyi sluha? Teolohichnyi pohliad na rol Tserkov u pidtrymtsi hromadianskoho suspilstva v Ukraini” {Moral custodian or kenotic servant? Theological vision on the role of the Churches in the promotion of civil society in Ukraine}, <http://esweek.org.ua/index.php/en/ekumenichnij-cotsialnij-tizhden/5-est/dopovidi/405-dr-gelen-zorgdrager.html> (accessed October 29, 2013).

124 Hertog, *Religious Peacebuilding*, 471.

peace”<sup>125</sup> bringing about the example of the community of Sant’Egidio that “started its activities from distributing food to the most needy.”<sup>126</sup> The needs of daily existence have to be satisfied before the interest in the narratives of reconciliation can be awakened.

The industrialisation process of the Soviet Union brought Ukraine stability and relative prosperity. Although the country witnessed the lack of products of daily use, especially in the last years of its existence as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, its economy was developed and the level of unemployment was very low. The situation changed dramatically after the demise of the Soviet state in 1991. The existing economic interconnections with other former Soviet countries were dissolved and the country faced a grave economic crisis, stagnation and harsh unemployment especially in the early 1990s. Nowadays Ukraine is a highly corrupted country (in 2012 ranked on place 144 among 176 countries and territories),<sup>127</sup> with a significant level of joblessness and one of the lowest wages in Europe,<sup>128</sup> a country that underwent the lack of transparency in the privatisation process, with the urgent need to introduce reasonable reforms in the health care system and the pension reform, etc.

Of significance to the frustrating outcomes of reforms in a divided post-Communist society is the complex bureaucratic administrative structure. The old-new elite that emerged after the privatisation of the 1990s got the power with their primary goal being the security of the own businesses. At the same time uncontrolled corruption, unemployment, low living standards, bureaucracy of the state institutions, difficulties in establishing and running business, unstable political situation obstruct economic reforms. Back in 1994 Frank Umbach in his review of the Ukrainian-Russian relations and the all-Ukrainian unity concluded that peace and security in Ukraine will largely depend upon whether Ukraine would be able to “stabilise its own economy – the prerequisite for the cohesion of this multinational state, its society and independence.”<sup>129</sup> What comes first – coming

---

125 Dymyd, Reconciliation. Translation from the original source.

126 Ibid.

127 “Corruption Perceptions Index 2012,” <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2012/results> (accessed February 28, 2014).

128 Since I have not found another source on the European salaries which illustrates the situation in Ukraine I refer to the following article on Wikipedia: “List of European Countries by Average Wage,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_European\\_countries\\_by\\_average\\_wage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_European_countries_by_average_wage) (accessed April 7, 2014).

129 Umbach, Russia, 39.

to terms with the past, national reconciliation, and then the construction of the developed democratic country or would things rather better work vice versa? It means that by boosting the economic development, a country can achieve a necessary peaceful atmosphere in order to discuss the dividing elements of its history and identity.

Vince Gamberale who studied the role of the economic development for the reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, concluded that economic reforms are a powerful neutral force for the promotion of cooperation across a divided society because they provide “an opportunity to put aside differences in order to pursue needs.”<sup>130</sup> The author is convinced that economic and business development initiatives encourage tolerance, mutual confidence and cooperation across the ethnic divides. In his opinion, even though tolerance is not yet reconciliation, however it is a foundation on which the process can take root over the long term.<sup>131</sup> After all, even the European Project started in 1951 with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community that was established to promote economic development but extended to provide an environment of tolerance and cooperation between previously warring nations.<sup>132</sup> Although the overall situation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is significantly different from that of Ukraine, both countries face the need of the modernisation of the economy and both have a divided society though to a different degree.

The deficit of justice has many faces in contemporary Ukraine, among them, for instance, failing reforms in the sphere of education. Here the Ukrainian state must also catch up. In 2002 a reform was implemented which presumed a twelve-year school education instead of the existing eleven. Additionally, in 2008, instead of passing the admission exams for university, which implied great corruption practices, a compulsory external independent evaluation of the quality of knowledge was introduced for those wishing to enter university. This practice, even though connected to some inconveniences and a certain non-objectivity, has the great advantage of the almost complete exclusion of corruption while entering university. The system allowed talented children from poor and simple families to get access to education. However, in 2010 the government of Presi-

---

130 Vince Gamberale, “The Role of Economic Development in Reconciliation. An Experience from Bosnia and Herzegovina,” in *Pathways to Reconciliation. Between Theory and Practice*, eds. Philipa Rothfield, Cleo Fleming, and Paul A. Komesaroff (n.p.: Ashgate, 2008), 155.

131 *Ibid.*, 157.

132 *Ibid.*

dent Yanukovych introduced two major changes in that reform. Firstly, there was a comeback to the eleven-year school education which in practice meant the development of new manuals with all the financial and material costs connected with it. Secondly and more importantly, although the external independent evaluation of the quality of knowledge was not cancelled, in order to be admitted to university, school graduates have to additionally present their school certificates indicating grades. This opens up ways of manipulation and corruption because parents can “buy” a necessary school certificate with sufficiently high grades. The value of the external evaluation certificate is then mitigated. Thus, this educational reform is an example of inconsistency and even of contradiction with regard to reforms. This case should illustrate that transformation and reconciliation cannot only be a spiritual programme; it must entail addressing concrete demands for justice.

The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church functions at the intersection of eastern and western Christian traditions. The comparison of her approach to justice with the Orthodox one reveals interesting similarities. The Orthodox attitude to justice and peace centres on “the ontological renewal of the human person,”<sup>133</sup> “the true revolution of the human person,”<sup>134</sup> the need to free the human person from sin, “the main cause of injustice (absence of justice) and hostility (absence of peace).”<sup>135</sup> Justice and peace is “a question of an inner approach in the mode of sanctification and uplifting of the human person upon which any social, political or cultural changes depends.”<sup>136</sup> Hence, the Orthodox Church emphasises that the regeneration of the human person and not the “mere acceptance of social rules designed to secure the order of society” will bring about the social change and thriving of justice. The Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church adopts a very similar approach.

Contrary to the Orthodox approach, the discussion on justice in the texts representing Catholic social teaching starts from concrete situations of human existence: “Understanding of justice is shaped by the specific eras and events to which it is responding.”<sup>137</sup> Subsequently, the social nature of the human person is emphasised: “Human interdependence pro-

---

133 Giultsis, *An Ethical Approach*, 67.

134 *Ibid.*, 58.

135 *Ibid.*, 67.

136 *Ibid.*, 57.

137 Mary Elsbernd and Reimund Bieringer, *When Love Is not Enough. A Theo-Ethic of Justice* (Collegeville, MI: Liturgical Press, 2002), 106.

vides a foundation for an understanding of justice as participation.”<sup>138</sup> Because “participatory and mutual relationships enhance political, social, and economic life,”<sup>139</sup> they have direct implication for reconciliation.

The reasoning of the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* is illustrative. This text presented a new theological method of moral discernment when instead of deduction from moral law it introduced the consideration of concrete living experiences of people, the “see, judge, act” approach that prompted the concept of “signs of the times.”<sup>140</sup> Revisioning and criticising the concept of justice of John Rawls and promoting the capability approach, Amartya Sen calls to abandon the vision of justice as an abstract ideal. Instead, he develops a bottom-up approach according to which the analysis of the basic reality of people’s existence helps make society more just: “The focus on actual lives in the assessment of justice has many far-reaching implications for the nature and reach of the idea of justice.”<sup>141</sup> Raymond Aina’s dissertation arguing against the romanticising of the restorative justice in the thought of Desmond Tutu, is a plea against the abstract, unbelievable, void of realism concept of justice in social ethics.<sup>142</sup>

The reflection of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church on social questions should start from looking at the daily reality of people’s experiences. In her official pronouncements, the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church addressed certain elements of justice, for example, not paying salaries or the eradication of corruption.<sup>143</sup> Sometimes the Church leadership calls the

---

138 Ibid., 107.

139 Ibid.

140 Johan Verstraeten, “*Pacem in Terris* in Contemporary Theological Reflection,” in *Il concetto di pace. Attualità della Pacem in Terris nel 50 anniversario (1963-2013)*, ed. Vittorio V. Alberti (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013), 83.

141 Amartya Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (n.p.: Penguin Books, 2010), xi.

142 Raymond Aina, “Overcoming “Toxic” Emotions and the Role of Restorative Justice. A Christian Ethical Reflection on Restorative Justice’s Promises, Ambiguities and Inspirations towards Peacebuilding in Nigeria” (PhD diss., Leuven Catholic University, 2010), 304.

143 Few examples of the documents of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church dedicated to different social issues in Ukraine (borrowed from Lesia Kovalenko, ed., *Sotsialno zorientovani dokumenty Ukraïnskoï Hreko-Katolytskoï Tserkvy (1989-2008)* {Socially oriented documents of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (1989-2008)} (Lviv: Ukrainian Catholic University, 2008)): “Zvernennia Yepyskopiv Ukraïnskoï Hreko-Katolytskoï Tserkvy do virnykh ta vsikh liudei dobroï voli pro zavdannia khrystyianyna v suchasnomu suspilstvi” {Address of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Bishops to the faithful and all people of good will



wealthy to charity as a way of executing their responsibility for the neighbour, for instance, through granting microcredits or micro investing.<sup>144</sup> However, the Church leadership did not develop the comprehensive theory of justice that “concerns itself with the functioning of the whole socio-economic order in its interactive parts, rather than with the various relationships between the parts.”<sup>145</sup> Such a theory of justice presupposes the correction of the systemic injustices and the creation of the circumstances for participation. Hence, it is insufficient to call every particular person to fight corruption, to convert, to change oneself hoping to reach in that way the transformation of the entire corruptive system. *Pacem in Terris* shows that merely moral exhortations do not suffice because they cannot be “translated in a moral law for the state.”<sup>146</sup> A person-centred approach to social transformation has to be completed by attention to the institutional dimension.

This element of justice is present in the tradition of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. Just consider the “holy peace” notion of Liubomyr Husar or the references to social justice of Sviatoslav Shevchuk. However, the impact of social justice on reconciliation has to be amplified

---

about the mission of the Christian in modern society}, 12.03.1999; ‘Khrystyiany i nevyplata zarplatni.’ Zvernennia Synodu Yepyskopiv Kyievo-Halytskoi Mytropolii Ukrainskoi Hreko-Katolytskoi Tserkvy do dukhovenstva i myriian ta usikh liudei dobroj voli” {“Christians and wage arrears.” Address of the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Metropolia of Kyiv-Halych to the clergy, the laity and all people of good will}, 10.10.2000; “Zvernennia Synodu Yepyskopiv Kyievo-Halytskoi Mytropolii Ukrainskoi Hreko-Katolytskoi Tserkvy do virnykh ta vsikh liudei dobroj voli shchodo sotsialno-politychnoi situatsii v Ukraini” {Address of the Synod of Bishops of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Metropolia of Kyiv-Halych to the faithful and all the people of good will about the social and political situation in Ukraine}, 28.01.2004; “Pro yavyshe habarnytstva v nashii kraini ta yak yoho poboriuvaty.’ Zvernennia do virnykh na Velykyi pist Yepyskopiv Kyievo-Halytskoho Verkhovnoho Arkhyiepyskopstva Ukrainskoi Hreko-Katolytskoi Tserkvy” {“On bribery in our country and how to fight it.” Lent address of the Bishops of the Major Archbishopric of Kyiv-Halych of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church to the faithful}, 05.03.2008.

144 “Pastyrskie poslannia Blazhennishoho Sviatoslava do virnykh Ukrainskoi Hreko-Katolytskoi Tserkvy na Velykyi pist 2013 roku” {Pastoral letter of His Beatitude Sviatoslav to the faithful of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church on the Great Lent of 2013}, <http://www.ugcc.org.ua/2695.0.html> (accessed February 10, 2014).

145 Elsbernd and Bieringer, *When Love Is not Enough*, 107.

146 Verstraeten, *Pacem in Terris*, 82.

in the Church's teaching. The example of the recent EuroMaidan in Ukraine illustrates my point. Similar to the Orange Revolution, mass demonstrations and the subsequent regime overturn were realised by people who could not anymore put up with the misuses of the corruptive criminal state. The position of the individuals with an alternative way of hiking played its role. However, it is only an initiative step. For the transformation to get embedded the new state authorities must generate reforms on the institutional level that would make the overindulgence of power impossible, for instance through the elaboration of the appropriate anti-corruption legal basis. The documents of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church show that this element is underdeveloped in the social ethics of that Church.

#### 4.3.2 John Paul Lederach: conflicts originate from the lack of social justice

John Paul Lederach renders the final goal of conflict transformation as the *justpeace* which points at the fact that the establishment of social and economic justice is an essential element of the constructive change.<sup>147</sup> The *justpeace* "requires the redress of legitimate grievances and the establishment of new relations characterised by equality and fairness according to the dictates of human dignity and the common good."<sup>148</sup>

Protracted conflicts emerge as the result of an enduring experience of marginalisation, poverty, economic struggle, and political exclusion.<sup>149</sup> As long as those exist in a society, sources of conflicts will remain. In that regard, contemporary Ukraine with its marginalisation of different groups, economic underdevelopment, lawlessness, and high-handedness of the state authorities will preserve its conflicting potential. The recent EuroMaidan in Ukraine broke out because of such structural injustices: the primary motivation of the people to go on the was not getting closer to Eu-

---

147 John Paul Lederach and Scott Appleby, "Strategic Peacebuilding. An Overview," in *Strategies of Peace. Transforming Conflict in a Violent World*, eds. Dan Philpott and Gerald Powers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 23.

148 *Ibid.*, 24.

149 John Paul Lederach, "The Long Journey Back to Humanity. Catholic Peacebuilding with Armed Actors," in *Peacebuilding. Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*, eds. Robert J. Schreiter, R. Scott Appleby, and Regard F. Powers (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 28.

rope but the demand for a fundamental change of the structures of power in the country and the establishment of new democratic institutions.<sup>150</sup> Lederach points at the fact that it is essential for the Churches to address the issue of justice in their pastoral letters, public statements or national campaigns. Ukrainian Churches have to make up a leeway here.

#### 4.3.3 Robert Schreiter: overcoming structural injustices – soothing social tensions – advancing reconciliation

Robert Schreiter equally postulates that the question of justice in the context of reconciliation is complicated and very important in circumstances similar to the Ukrainian nowadays. The thinker opines that at the basis of every conflict are injustices as root causes and “Without addressing the root causes of conflict, there is little hope of overcoming it in the future.”<sup>151</sup> The analysis above proves that the leadership of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church does not pay sufficient attention to justice in its reconciliation pronouncements. The studied texts demonstrate a variety of references to justice: historical justice as the establishment of the truth about the past, warning that seeking justice can cause retribution, justice as a right to freely pursue one’s identity and language, justice as an inevitable counterpart of “the holy peace” and of the preservation of the dignity of every human being that stays close to social justice – precondition of peace, denoting respect for every individual and, consequently, the exclusion of extremism and violence because of the otherness of the other. Sometimes justice is neglected as extraneous to the process of the purification of the heart. There are indeed texts on certain aspects of justice, for instance, holding back salaries or corruption are rendered as a violation of the demands for justice. Justice occupies even less space in the pronouncements dedicated to reconciliation.

Robert Schreiter singles out three types of justice that are relevant to the process of reconciliation: punitive, restorative, and structural justice. On February 24, 2014 the Ukrainian Parliament charged a number of Ukrainian state functionaries of the highest rank including the President Viktor Yanukovich with the deliberate killing of protesters in Kyiv during No-

---

150 Claudia Dathe and Andreas Rostek, Vorwort to *Majdan! Ukraine, Europa*, eds. Claudia Dathe and Andreas Rostek (Berlin: Edition.foto TAPETA, 2014), 13.

151 Schreiter, *A Practical Theology*, 388.

vember 2013 – February 2014.<sup>152</sup> As a matter of fact, dealing with the past through lustration has never been performed in Ukraine although it was reasonable at the time of the democratic turn in 1991, then after the Orange Revolution in 2005, and recently in 2014 in the view of the crimes of the regime of President Yanukovich. Corresponding demands were expressed on February 25, 2014 by the activists of the EuroMaidan concerning the creation of the new transition government.<sup>153</sup> Volodymyr Klychko with Oleh Tyahnybok, the leaders of the opposition parties “Udar” and “Svoboda,” equally expressed themselves in favour of a broader lustration in the country.<sup>154</sup> The latter additionally sustains the adoption of a bill that would ban the Communist Party and communist ideology in Ukraine. Perhaps the lustration should be expanded onto the state functionaries of the lowest local level as well.

According to Schreiter, restorative justice is about the equal distribution of societal goods, reparations, the restoration of the dignity of victims, and the rehabilitation of wrongdoers.<sup>155</sup> Sometimes the restoration of the dignity of the victim means his or her rehabilitation from being commonly portrayed as a wrongdoer. The latter is underway in Ukraine, for example, with the current campaign for the official rehabilitation of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army through its recognition as belligerent in World War II. This causes protests from the adherents of the Soviet version of the history where Ukrainian nationalists were perceived as a threat and whose memory had been silenced for years.<sup>156</sup> The plea of the Ukrainian Greek-

---

152 “Ukraine Charges Former President Yanukovich with Mass Murder,” <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/terrorism-security/2014/0224/Ukraine-charges-former-President-Yanukovich-with-mass-murder-video> (accessed February 27, 2014).

153 In particular, the activists demand that as ministers of the transitional government of the people’s trust cannot be elected persons from the list of the first hundred richest Ukrainians, functionaries of the presidential administration or executive authorities who occupied those posts since 2010 when Viktor Yanukovich became President of Ukraine; additionally, the candidates cannot be implicated in human rights violations or possess a corruption dossier (“Maidanivtsi vysunuly vymohy do uriadu narodnoi doviry” {Activists of the EuroMaidan put forward demands to the government of the people’s trust}, <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/02/25/7016162/> (accessed February 27, 2014).

154 “Klitschko, Tyahnybok Favor Lustration in Ukraine,” <http://www.interfax.com/newsinf.asp?id=483460> (accessed February 27, 2014).

155 Schreiter, *A Practical Theology*, 389.

156 For the supporters of this version of history, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army belongs to the nationalistic military formations which supported the Nazis and

Catholic Church for her official rehabilitation in connection with the Pseudo-Synod of 1946 shows another challenge of restorative justice. The merit of restorative justice in that case consists in the restoration of dignity through telling the truth about the past of certain persons or groups. The reparations to the victims of the EuroMaidan shot by the snipers on the order of President Yanukovich also fulfil demands for restorative justice.

Schreiter names economic inequities, discrimination, or the lack of equal access to the societal goods as examples of structural injustices. Structural justice deals with the social structures of a society in the midst of which conflicts arise.<sup>157</sup> Existing injustices are criticised very generally; for instance, corruption is often named one of the biggest evils of present-day Ukraine. The leadership of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church has chosen a way of educating the faithful and motivating them to spiritual regeneration waging a morally good life. However, can that change a system when a little Ukrainian feels helpless in front of the powerful state machine?

Structural injustices are producing new sources of tensions in Ukrainian society. I aver that the somehow reserved attitude to Jews in Ukraine is connected to the fact that a significant number of the persons of Jewish origin are occupying leading positions among the state authorities and are among the owners of the biggest enterprises in the country.<sup>158</sup> Ukrainians, who are suffering under the consequences of the inability of the state leaders to conduct successful structural reforms, tend to blame those at power in their miseries. Similarly, the cultural tensions between the west and the east of Ukraine are aggravated by politicians who manipulate historical, linguistic, and national sentiments in order to cover their incompetence and to provide for their own well-being. The realisation of a successful plan of structural reforms in the country would help lower the level of current societal tensions. As Robert Schreiter points out, pursuing struc-

---

which consequently cannot be rehabilitated. The correspondent project of law was registered in the Ukrainian Parliament in May 2013. About the details and grounds behind the new draft law, read the blog of one of its initiators: Vadym Kolesnichenko, "Reabilitatsiia ta heroizatsiia usikh, khto borovsia proty antyhitlerivskoi koalitsii bude zaboronena v Ukraini (zakonoproekt)" {Rehabilitation and hero making of all those who struggled against the anti-Hitler coalition will be prohibited in Ukraine (law draft)}, <http://blogs.pravda.com.ua/authors/kolesnichenko/518a35535beb4/> (accessed October 28, 2013).

157 Schreiter, *A Practical Theology*, 389.

158 For details see paragraph 5.1.4.4 "The missing memory of Jews."

tural justice is not a project of several years and takes much more time than punitive or distributive justice. However, it is an endeavour which is crucially important if the existing sources of conflicts in society are to be soothed.

The Church does not have means to bring about structural justice in a direct way but it can become a voice to discover, name, and dismantle social structures that sustain injustices.<sup>159</sup> A practical contribution of the Ukrainian Churches to the promotion of structural changes could be the creation of the environment where people can learn to get engaged in a public discourse or to express their disagreements as citizens with the politics of the state; all that contributes to sewing together the fabric of civil society.<sup>160</sup> That is a great need for the generally passive, disappointed, and very individualistic Ukrainian consciousness. The goal can be achieved by granting the parishioners more self-determination in community life where the course of affairs is still mostly taken care of by the parish priest because of unwilling or passive faithful. Special attention has to be paid to the young generation. As part of the admittance of May 8, the Justice and Peace Commission of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church involved the young people into the cleaning of the graves of the German prisoners on the Lviv Yaniv Cemetery. It is an example of how to make the young generation be actively involved in public life.

#### 4.3.4 Miroslav Volf: genuine justice involves embrace

Is reconciliation possible without justice? If not, then what is the place of justice in reconciliation? Where does Volf put emphasis on justice? How does it help to inform the theology of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church on reconciliation?

“Between the complete disregard of justice and the relentless pursuit of justice lies forgiveness.”<sup>161</sup> The demands for justice are acceptable only in the context of reconciliation. Those words describe most pointedly the practical side of Volf’s approach to justice after violence has taken place.

For Miroslav Volf it is important to clarify that forgiveness does not cancel justice. The very reminder of the satisfactory death of Christ on the

---

159 Schreiter, *Justice and Reconciliation*.

160 Schreiter, *Theology of Reconciliation*.

161 Volf, *The End of Memory*, 111.

Cross means that even God demanded justice to accomplish the reconciliation of the world. As claimed above, justice is involved in the very act of forgiveness because while forgiving we accuse and call for justice in that way.

Volf harshly criticises the principal contemporary approaches to justice, be it the universalistic vision of justice (either based on the idea of God or on the capacity of the human reason to discern justice), a postmodern plurality of justices (grounded on radical difference), or justice within the tradition (communitarian approach).<sup>162</sup> Neither justice deriving from the concept of God, nor justice as a product of human reason can make a ground for a universal agreement on justice because the human capacity to learn what is just will always be limited. The merit of the postmodern plurality of justices consists in their appreciation of the concrete person; however, since postmodernism does not have a strong concept of identity, the question what is just for a particular individual will remain unanswered. Finally, the communitarians' claim that justice is grounded in the tradition does not lead to an agreement of what justice is because of the conflicts between different traditions. Following those criticisms, Volf unfolds his vision of justice that rests on two key premises. First, justice is brought in connection with the will to reconciliation: "... Agreement on justice depends on the will to embrace the other and... justice itself will be unjust as long as it does not become a mutual embrace."<sup>163</sup> The second reveals the intention of the author "not so much to specify what justice is as to propose how we should go about seeking and pursuing justice in the context of plurality and enmity."<sup>164</sup> This brings us back to Amartya Sen with his vision of justice that derives from listening to the people's idea of what a just life means.

The search for justice becomes one of the indicators of whether there is a genuine desire for reconciliation. The claims of justice cannot be left unaddressed. It equally applies to the cases of the egregious human rights abuses and to the situation in contemporary Ukraine where the nation for more than 20 years has been searching for a way to rebuild its social coexistence. In contemporary Ukraine justice is about the principles of the development of society in transition. Which laws should the country adopt? Which economic freedoms or social care politics? What should happen in

---

162 Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace* (1996), 197-207.

163 *Ibid.*, 197.

164 *Ibid.*

the sphere of education and international relations? Which Church-state relations should be pursued? Where are the rights of all sorts of minorities and immigrants? All those issues are directly connected to the issues of structural justice.

In Volf's opinion, the only proper way of looking for justice is not losing sight of the reconciliation-embrace as the final aim of the whole endeavour. Reconciliation will not succeed if the demands for justice are abandoned. However, the link between justice and reconciliation can be apprehended in a false way. Two such untenable approaches which Volf criticises are first pursuing justice – then awaiting reconciliation and completely abandoning the claims of justice.<sup>165</sup> In Volf's opinion, neither will succeed. In the first case reconciliation will fail because strict justice after gross violence is in principle impossible and even undesirable and the estranged parties remain distanced from each other. Additionally, the theological notion of forgiveness as an unconditional free gift will be hollowed. Cheap reconciliation as abandoning the demands for justice obviously precludes reconciliation and denies the Christian message of fighting against economic, political and any other sort of oppression.

For Volf, the core of the relationship between reconciliation and justice consists in the unconditional and indiscriminate love of God. The immediate consequence of that love of God is *the will to embrace* – love by human beings which is the most fundamental obligation of every Christian:

“The will to give ourselves to others and to welcome them, to readjust our identities to make space for them, is prior to any judgement about others, except that of identifying them in their humanity. The will to embrace precedes any “truth” about others and any reading of their action with respect to justice. This will is absolutely indiscriminate and strictly immutable; it transcends the moral mapping of the social world into “good” and “evil.”<sup>166</sup>

The author is aware of the radicalism of his approach; furthermore, he believes that precisely in this radicalism consists the social significance of embrace-reconciliation. Even this obligation of the will to embrace does not eliminate the pursuit of justice. Embrace belongs to the definition of justice. On the basis of the theology of the cross, justice demands that space is made for the other, that the perspective of the other is included

---

165 Miroslav Volf, “Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Justice. A Christian Contribution to a More Peaceful Social Environment,” in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation. Religion, Public Policy, and Conflict Transformation*, eds. Raymond Helmick and Rodney Petersen (n.p: Templeton, 2001), 34-39.

166 *Ibid.*, 42.



through “double vision.<sup>167</sup>” Miroslav Volf emphasises that the *will to embrace* is unconditional but not *the embrace itself*: “The will to embrace includes in itself the will to determine what is just and to name wrong as wrong... the will to rectify the wrongs that have been done... the will to reshape the relationships to correspond to justice.”<sup>168</sup> The will to embrace is so important because without it the opponents will cling to their vision of justice with minimum chances to finish the strife. Indeed, this scenario is reiterated in the relationship between the Greek-Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church or in the Volyn issue between Poles and Ukrainians.

For Volf, justice means searching the truth and naming evil, and then guided by the will to embrace, that is love, create a community where differences are recognised, accepted and given a space to flourish. The goal of reconciliation is primarily “the integration of citizens into a political unity as the creation of a community in which each recognises and is recognised by all and in which all mutually give themselves to each other in love.”<sup>169</sup> Does not that elucidate the essence of the all-Ukrainian reconciliation, sometimes described as national unity? According to Volf’s model, the goal of the all-Ukrainian reconciliation should consist in the creation of a community where the rights of everybody are indiscriminately sustained notwithstanding religious or national adherence, economic or political status. Such a project is directly linked to pursuing justice. Thus, reconciliation – and justice coupled with it – should become a way of living.

Volf does not elaborate on concrete ways of bringing about justice. However, the value of this contribution consists in underlying the Christian element of justice – love. In that way, Volf’s radical understanding of reconciliation implies the radical understanding of justice. And thus the legitimate conclusion is that all three reference authors help fill the gap in the Greek-Catholic teaching on justice. While Schreiter and Lederach corroborate the need to address structural injustices for the advancement of reconciliation, Miroslav Volf postulates that genuine prescripts of justice are based on embrace, the will to welcome the different other in his or her humanity. Those considerations enrich the vision of justice of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. In particular, the notion of the “holy peace,” shortly mentioned by Liubomyr Husar, contains the elements of compre-

---

167 Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace* (1996), 220.

168 Volf, *Forgiveness*, 43.

169 *Ibid.*, 45.

hensive peace through the denouncement of structural injustices. This places the preservation of the human dignity in the centre of any social construct and should be further developed in the social teaching of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church because it correlates with the aim of reconciliation as a step towards the transformation of Ukrainian society.