

Summary of and Opinions Heard at the Special General Meeting of St. Andrew's Ukrainian Orthodox Sobor Parish Regarding The Primatial Encyclical of His Eminence Metropolitan Ilarion proclaimed August 25, 2023

The following is a summary of the Special General Meeting of St. Andrew's Ukrainian Orthodox Sobor Parish (SGM):

1. The SGM was held in the Tillie Kurysh Hall within the Parish complex on September 10, 2023 commencing at 12:30pm with an opening prayer.
2. The stated purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for the St. Andrew's Parish membership to provide their individual opinions on the potential for the UOCC to adopt the Revised Julian or Gregorian Calendar in accordance with the Primatial Encyclical of His Eminence Metropolitan Ilarion.
3. 34 members of the Parish attended the SGM. The Primatial Encyclical was read. Attendees were then asked to provide opinion.
4. Of the 34 attendees, 18 attending members verbally shared their opinions. 6 members who couldn't attend the SGM in person passed their opinions on through some attending individuals who in turn shared those opinions to the attending members – therefore, a total of 24 members opined on the topic.
5. 22 of the 24 opinions (an overwhelming majority of those opining) were to adopt the Revised Julian Calendar, whereas 2 opinions were to keep the Julian Calendar.
6. Just before the end of the meeting, the aforementioned numbers were summarized verbally to the attendees and the 16 attendees that didn't opine during the meeting were then given an opportunity to agree or disagree with the overwhelming majority. At this point, one additional attendee indicated her opinion to adopt the Revised Julian Calendar.
7. At approximately 2:00pm, the meeting was concluded and a final prayer was sung by the attending members.
8. While members were departing, one other member approached Michael Zukiwsky and indicated that she too agrees with the adoption of the Revised Julian Calendar.
9. By the end of the meeting, 24 of 26 opinions were to adopt the Revised Julian Calendar, with none of the other 14 attending members disagreeing with the voiced opinions.

It is specifically pointed out that a vote was not conducted at any time during the meeting, all those that wanted to speak did speak, and there wasn't any criticism levelled from any one member to another.

The opinions voiced in support of the adoption of the Revised Julian Calendar (listed approximately from most to least frequently heard during the SGM) are summarized:

- a. The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ would occur on Dec. 24/25 (and not on Jan. 6/7) which allows for more family to gather and celebrate together, often because businesses allow greater time away from work freeing remote family members to travel "home".
- b. The Government of Canada recognizes Christmas on Dec. 24/25.
- c. It doesn't matter when *Sviat Vechir* meal is held, but it is held when family can be together.
- d. The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ would occur on Dec. 24/25 which would allow us to celebrate the birth of Christ with other Christian denominations.
- e. The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ would occur on Dec. 24/25 which would allow those with family in Ukraine to celebrate together now that the Orthodox Church of Ukraine is also celebrating Christmas on Dec. 24/25.

- f. The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ would occur on Dec. 24/25; therefore, there is the opportunity for us to de-commercialize that time period ourselves and to teach our children the Ukrainian Christmas traditions on a date which is not Jan. 6/7. Perhaps it is only “us” that perceive December 24/25 as too commercialized. There are probably plenty of Orthodox of other nationality and non-Orthodox who do not think Dec. 24/25 is too commercialized.
- g. The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ would occur on Dec. 24/25 which would potentially have more people attending church. Indeed, a member came to Christmas church service one year and saw only five members in church – she wondered where all of the supporters of the Julian Calendar were?
- h. With the Julian Calendar, a single remote family member always had to celebrate the birth of Christ away from home.
- i. The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ would occur on Dec. 24/25 which would allow those who “celebrate” December 31 new year’s eve festivities the opportunity to do so without breaking fast.
- j. With the Julian Calendar, the UOCC inadvertently penalizes those members whose employers don’t allow them time away from work on Jan. 6/7. For example: “If I go to church at midnight Jan. 6, then I am really tired the next day at work, and I cannot afford to be.”, or “I cannot get time away from work on Jan. 7 so I cannot go to church.”

Opinions provided in support of keeping the Julian Calendar:

- k. Paraphrasing an opinion - “I unsure why, but I want Christmas celebration to stay on Jan. 6/7. It’s the way we’ve always done it.”
- l. The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ would continue on Jan. 6/7, and that would allow us to be with friends and family for two Christmas celebrations – on Dec. 24/25 and on Jan. 6/7.

An observation – there was confusion with at least three attendees whether or not the occurrence of Easter would change to match that of the Gregorian Calendar if the UOCC adopted the Revised Julian Calendar. After explanation that it would not, the confusion seemed to disappear. However, one member also wants Easter (not only Christmas) to follow the calendar agreed upon by the Canadian Government (the Gregorian Calendar). That member and his family always lived because of work in remote communities where an Orthodox Church was not present – they attended the local Anglican Church.

End of SGM Summary