

# ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ

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## **RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS IN UKRAINE: HEROIC DEEDS AND MEMORY. The Role of Orthodox Clergy and Believers in Saving the Jewish Population from the Holocaust during the World War II**

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*The purpose of the study.* To examine the role and participation of the Orthodox clergy and believers in saving the Jewish population from the Holocaust during the World War II and to understand the Babyn Yar tragedy in order to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust victims and the “righteous among the nations” in Ukraine. **The methodological foundations** of the study are based on the principles of historicism, scientific objectivity, systematicity, and a dialectical approach to historical phenomena. In accordance with the aim and objectives, a combination of general scientific, interdisciplinary, and special research methods was used. **Scientific novelty.** The author analyses the evidence and statistics on the participation of Orthodox clergy and believers in saving the Jewish population from the Holocaust during the World War II. It is emphasised that the rescue and hiding of Jews by Ukrainians during the German occupation was, without exaggeration, a sacrificial and heroic feat, because, according to the orders of the occupation authorities, not only those who did it, but also all members of their families were threatened with execution. Examples are given of how the rescue of Jews by Ukrainians was not just the actions of individual citizens, but of entire groups of people, including fellow villagers. It is noted that the actual number of Ukrainians who saved Jews from the Holocaust is actually many times

*higher than the official Yad Vashem data. It is noted that there are at least 1 436 residents of different regions of Ukraine who are officially classified as “righteous among the nations” in other countries. Thus, if we add to the official figure of 2 673 Ukrainian righteous people another 1 436 residents of different regions of Ukraine on the lists of other countries, we will have at least 4 109 recognised “righteous people.”<sup>1</sup> It is emphasised that in many of these cases, the religious beliefs of the rescuers played an important role. This aspect is still the least studied. However, there are grounds to say that the religious feelings and beliefs of many Ukrainian Righteous were key to their choices and actions. Attention is drawn to the problem that, due to the lack of sources and the irretrievable loss of eyewitnesses, it is now extremely difficult to determine the inner motives of religious consciousness that influenced the feat of Ukrainian saviours, as well as the names of many saviours who remain unknown. It is noted that no thorough and systematic research has yet been conducted on the role of the Orthodox clergy and believers in saving the Jewish population from the Holocaust during the World War II. The author emphasises the need to continue searches and research that will help to discover new names and deeds of Ukrainian “righteous.” Attention is drawn to the problem that, in the context of the current Russian-Ukrainian war, the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church actively uses and promotes neo-imperial narratives of the “Russian world” in the Orthodox environment to justify military aggression. Ukrainian war, the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church actively uses and promotes neo-imperial narratives of the “Russian world” in the Orthodox environment to justify military aggression, which, as in Nazi Germany, are imbued with xenophobic and anti-Semitic ideas. It is emphasized that the study, promoting, and honoring the deeds and memory of the Righteous Among the Nations will contribute to the formation of positive moral guidelines among both priests and believers of Christian denominations in Ukraine,*

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<sup>1</sup> The author presents data on the Righteous Among the Nations as of January 1, 2021. This data has now been updated, and according to official statistics from Yad Vashem, as of January 1, 2024, the title of Righteous Among the Nations has been awarded to 2,713 individuals on the Ukrainian national list and to 1,506 individuals on other national lists who were living in what is now Ukraine at the time of the rescue. In total, there are 4,219 Righteous Among the Nations (calculations made by the “Tkuma”, Ukrainian Institute for Holocaust Studies “Tkuma”) (Editor’s note).

*thereby preventing the spread of pseudo-religious chauvinistic, xenophobic, and Black Hundreds ideas.*

**Keywords:** *Holocaust, Babyn Yar, World War II, Yad Vashem, Ukraine, Righteous Among the Nations.*

The example of Christian priests – Rescuers and Righteous Among the Nations – is important for Christian communities not only in terms of highlighting the phenomenon of rescue in the context of research into the tragic pages of the history of the Holocaust in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Studying, popularizing, and honoring their deeds can contribute to the formation of positive moral guidelines (including for those who choose the path of priesthood) for Ukrainian Orthodoxy and society in general. It is precisely such examples that promote trust in the church, as opposed to the cultivation of chauvinistic, xenophobic, and Black Hundreds ideas, which have continued to spread within the Russian Orthodox Church since the days of the Russian Empire. This is especially relevant in the context of the current Russian-Ukrainian war, when the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church, in order to justify military aggression since 2014, has been actively using and promoting neo-imperial narratives of the “Russian world”, which, as in Nazi Germany, are steeped in xenophobic and anti-Semitic ideas.

When talking about the Holocaust during World War II in Ukraine, one of the most tragic pages in our history comes to mind – the tragedy of Babyn Yar in Kyiv. This place is a symbol of the horrific crimes committed by the Nazi occupation regime against the Jewish, Ukrainian and other peoples, and at the same time a sacred place of remembrance for all of us. Over 100,000 people were shot here between 1941 and 1943. Members of the Ukrainian and Soviet underground, leaders of the Ukrainian national movement, Soviet prisoners of war, partisans, as well as the mentally ill, and many Roma. But our fellow citizens of Jewish nationality suffered the most. Their persecution by the Nazi regime had the character of total extermination on ethnic grounds, which undoubtedly meets the criteria of Holocaust. In just two days, on 29–30 September 1941, the Nazis

shot about 34,000 Jews in Babyn Yar.<sup>2</sup> Over the next few years, tens of thousands of Jews and other nationalities continued to be killed at Babyn Yar. Therefore, Babyn Yar is a shared place of tragedy and memory for Jewish people, as well as for the Ukrainian, Roma, and many others. Even Orthodox priests were shot here by the Nazis.

Metropolitan Mykola (Yarushevych), as a member of the Extraordinary State Commission for the Establishment and Investigation of the Crimes of the Nazi Invaders, was one of the first to take part in the inspection of Kyiv after its liberation in November 1943. In his report he described in detail the tragedy of Babyn Yar and other places of mass executions of Jews and of other nationalities by the occupiers in the city.

According to the testimony of Metropolitan Mykola, “more than 100,000 murdered people were buried in Babyn Yar”; and “in an anti-tank ditch, not far from these ravines, about 25,000 more people were buried.”<sup>3</sup> Near Babyn Yar, there was the so-called Syretsk camp for Soviet prisoners of war and a concentration camp for civilians, where mass executions of people of different nationalities also took place. More than 800 more mentally ill people were killed on the territory of the Kyiv Psychiatric Hospital. In addition, “on the banks of the Dnipro River, behind the Lavra wall, near the wells of St. Anthony and St. Theodosius, there was a camp for Jews, where about 500 able-bodied Jews were imprisoned,” who were also murdered by the Nazis.<sup>4</sup>

Among other things, as Yarushkevych notes in his report, in addition to the Jewish population, “the first victims of German violence among the churchmen of Kyiv” were the rector of the church at the Baikove cemetery, Archpriest Pavlo Ostrensky, and the rector of the St. Nicholas church, Archimandrite Oleksandr (Vyshniakov), who were shot by the Germans under unclear circumstances in November 1941.<sup>5</sup> Their bodies were buried with other victims of the Babyn Yar massacres. This fact was even reflected

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<sup>2</sup> Patrick Dempsey, *Babi Yar: A Jewish Catastrophe* (Measheem: P. A. Draigh, 2005), 152.

<sup>3</sup> Николай (Ярушевич), митр. *Журнал Московской патриархии* 4 (декабрь 1943): 20–21.

<sup>4</sup> Николай (Ярушевич), *Журнал Московской патриархии*, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Николай (Ярушевич), *Журнал Московской патриархии*, 22–23.

in the renowned work of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*.<sup>6</sup> Among the victims of Babyn Yar, the name of the Orthodox nun Esther is also mentioned, although more precise information about her has unfortunately not been found.

According to the testimony of Metropolitan Mykola (Yarushevych), among the victims of the Nazis in occupied Kyiv were Abbot Irinarch (Kondarkin) and monk Arkady, who died of beatings during their forced expulsion from the Kyiv Cave Monastery. The Germans also murdered the centenarian nun Seraphima (Holubenkova) and her novice Olexandra.<sup>7</sup> There were also many victims of the Nazi regime among the Orthodox clergy in other regions of occupied Ukraine.

The horrors of war, occupation, and the repressive actions of the Nazi regime among the population revealed different sides of their nature. There were those who, for various reasons, helped the occupiers search for Jews and other “enemies of the Reich.” Such actions are clearly condemnable. However, there were also many cases in which our compatriots, risking their own lives and the lives of their relatives and friends, saved Jewish families from certain death by hiding them in their homes, providing them with forged documents, baptismal certificates, and the like.

There are thousands of such examples in Ukraine and they are a source of national pride. Unfortunately, as most of these cases have not been documented they remain unknown.

As an example, we can cite one of the testimonies of such heroic deeds by the Orthodox priest Ignatii Hrohul', who lived in the village of Velyki Zahirtsy in the vicinity of Dubno in the Rivne region. His wife Varvara and children Stepan and Yevhenia lived with him. In 1942, they saved Arie-Leib's daughter Yakira by secretly taking her out of the ghetto and hiding her in their home. This is how the Jewish

<sup>6</sup> Александр Солженицын, “Расстрел дьякона Набережно-Никольской церкви в Киеве,” *Архипелаг ГУЛАГ. 1918–1956: Опыт художественного исследования*, т. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Николай (Ярушевич), *Журнал Московской патриархии*, 22; О. Н. Копылова, “Ущерб, причиненный Русской православной церкви в годы Великой Отечественной войны (по материалам Государственного архива РФ),” *Государственный архив РФ*, дата обращения 20 августа, 2021, <https://statearchive.ru/1177>.

girl Miriam Yakira (née Drukh), who was saved by this priest and his family, recalled it in April 1991:

One day my father said that he had obtained a document for me – now my name is Marusia, not Manechka... I was taken to the forest, where a young peasant woman was waiting for me, and she led me somewhere along a forest path for a long time. At the exit from the forest, she left me and I continued my journey alone. I got to a field, at the other end of which, on a hill, I saw houses with sloping roofs... I went into the house to which I was pointed and saw the priest there... I stayed in that house...

I remember well how once a dog barked loudly and I was warned that the Germans were coming. I managed to run into another room and crawl under the bed, covered with a goat's wool blanket that hung almost to the floor. The Germans were already in the room. I lay quietly and heard their footsteps and voices, saw their black boots. They turned around, searched and left, but the fear did not leave our hearts...

And then suddenly cars with German soldiers arrived in the village. They were quartered in the houses, and in ours too. They looked tired and shabby. They demanded food from us, a lot of food. I set the table for them, served them and cleaned up after them. I was the only one who understood them – their language was similar to Yiddish. They tried to talk to me, but I did not respond, as if I did not understand. Once I heard one German telling another that he could see by my eyes that I understood them, that I must be Jewish.

The priest and his family were very frightened and decided to flee the village. When evening came, we hurried to the forest... The Germans spotted us and started shooting. We ran towards the forest, and the bullets whistled over our heads. It was hard for me to run and they were dragging me. I don't remember how long we were hiding in the forest, I think it was several days. We had little food, but I did not feel hungry. We returned to the village after the Germans had left. The farm was ruined, the doors of the house, pigsty and stables were all wide open. There were no pigs or other animals...<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> "Воспоминания Мирьям Друх (урожденной Якира), апрель 1991," *Yad Vashem*, дата обращения 20 августа, 2021, <https://www.yadvashem.org/ru/righteous/stories/grogul/drukh-testimony.html>.

This is just one example of the sacrificial service of the Ukrainian Orthodox clergy, who risked their own lives to save Jews from the Holocaust.

We can also mention another Ukrainian righteous man, Archpriest Saveliy Tsybul'skyi (Tsybulnikov), rector of the Church of the Intercession in Kakhovka, Kherson region. Before the war, he was repressed for his religious beliefs by the Soviet regime. With the arrival of the Germans, when the mass extermination of Jews began in September 1941, he baptised many Jewish children, saving them from death.<sup>9</sup> However, with the advent of Soviet rule, he was imprisoned again, serving his sentence from 1944 to 1954 in the Karaganda concentration camp.<sup>10</sup> There he continued to serve and baptise prisoners illegally. After his release, he took monastic vows with the name Sergius and lived as an archimandrite at the Assumption Monastery in Odesa, where he died in 1964.<sup>11</sup>

Both of these priests are recognised as Righteous Among the Nations.

On the initiative of the Yad Vashem Memorial Complex for the Shoah and Heroism of the Jewish People, Israel grants the honorary title of Righteous Among the Nations to those who saved Jews during the World War II. There is a relevant Commission consisting of prominent Israeli lawyers, historians, and representatives of Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. Numerous testimonies and documents about the sacrificial deeds of these people are being collected in different countries.

Unfortunately, in the USSR, the topic of the Holocaust was long an ideological taboo. Because of this, the heroic deeds of our compatriots who saved Jews during the World War II was silenced. There was no search for and collection of testimonies from living eyewitnesses. The awarding of the title of "Righteous Among the Nations" to fellow citizens of capitalist Israel was obstructed in every possible way by the CPSU and KGB. The full implementation of such

<sup>9</sup> А. Яблонська, "Свято-Покровська церква у Каховці (кінець XVIII – початок XXI ст.). За матеріалами архівних джерел," *Південний архів. Історичні науки XXII* (2006): 205–206.

<sup>10</sup> Державний архів Херсонської області, ф. 3727, оп. 1, спр. 4, арк. 61–62.

<sup>11</sup> Яблонська, "Свято-Покровська церква у Каховці," 206.



work in Ukraine became possible only after the collapse of the USSR and the proclamation of state independence. However, an obstacle to such work now is that many witnesses to those events have passed away.<sup>12</sup>

According to official data from Yad Vashem, as of 1 January 2021, **2 673**<sup>13</sup> citizens in Ukraine have been awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations.<sup>14</sup> Officially, Ukraine ranks fourth among the countries of the world in terms of the number of recognised “Righteous Among the Nations” following France (**4 150**<sup>15</sup>), the Netherlands (**5 910**<sup>16</sup>) and Poland (**7 177**<sup>17</sup>).

At the same time, the actual number of Ukrainians who saved Jews from the Holocaust is actually many times higher. As noted on Yad Vashem’s official website, the officially announced “number of Righteous in a given country does not necessarily indicate the actual number of rescue stories, but only reflects the cases of which Yad Vashem is aware.”<sup>18</sup> While the collection of such testimonies in France or Holland has been going on since the 1960s, i.e. since the creation of Yad Vashem, in Ukraine, as already noted, such work began to be fully carried out only after 1991, which also naturally affected the number of recognised “Righteous” in Ukraine.

It is also worth adding that because the territory of Ukraine was divided between other neighbouring states before, during and after the World War II, many natives of Ukrainian lands are often classified as “Righteous Among the Nations” in the lists of other countries, including Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Russia. At least **1 436** residents of different regions of Ukraine are

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<sup>12</sup> Ігор Щупак, ред., *Праведники народів світу: Довідник* (Дніпро: Український інститут вивчення Голокосту “Ткума”, 2016), 10–11.

<sup>13</sup> According to the data as of January 1, 2024, 2,713 persons (*Editor’s note*).

<sup>14</sup> “Ukraine. Righteous Among the Nations Honored by Yad Vashem by 1 January 2020,” *Yad Vashem*, accessed August 20, 2021, <https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/pdf-drupal/ukraine.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> According to the data as of January 1, 2024, 4,303 persons (*Editor’s note*).

<sup>16</sup> According to the data as of January 1, 2024, 6,137 persons (*Editor’s note*).

<sup>17</sup> According to the data as of January 1, 2024, 7,318 persons (*Editor’s note*).

<sup>18</sup> “Names of Righteous by Country. Statistics,” *Yad Vashem*, accessed August 20, 2021, <https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/statistics.html>.



known to be officially classified as “Righteous Among the Nations” by other countries.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, if we add to the official figure of **2673** Ukrainian Righteous another **1436** residents of different regions of Ukraine according to the lists of other countries, the total number would be at least **4109** recognised Righteous.

It is worth emphasising that the rescue and hiding of Jews during the German occupation was, without exaggeration, a sacrificial and heroic deed. After all, according to the orders of the occupation authorities, not only those who did this were threatened with execution, but also all members of their families. And not just threatened, but very often many Ukrainians paid for such actions with their own lives. For example, there are many cases of Ukrainians being executed for hiding Jews in the Vinnytsia, Dnipro, Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, and Poltava regions.<sup>20</sup>

Often, examples of Ukrainians saving Jews were not just the actions of individual citizens, but of entire groups of people, including fellow villagers. For example, in some Ukrainian villages, local residents managed to shelter all Jews: in the village of Yaruga in Podillia, they managed to hide not only local Jewish residents but also refugees; in the village of Rakovets in the Lviv oblast, villagers hid 33 Jewish families; in the village of Blahodatne in the Dnipro oblast, 30 Jews were saved. According to Jewish researchers, “their rescue became possible only thanks to the collective support of the rest of the village.”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> “Праведники народів світу, які проживали на території України (за списками інших країн, за даними Яд Вашем, систематизовано Інститутом “Ткума”),” у *Пам’яті українців, які рятували євреїв під час Другої світової війни*, Ігор Щупак та ін., уклад. (Дніпро: Український інститут вивчення Голокосту “Ткума”, 2021), 153–238.

<sup>20</sup> “Убили односельчан, прятавших евреев. Акт. Харьковская область, Дергачевский р-н, с.Семеновка,” в *Документы обвиняют. Холокост: свидетельства Красной Армии*, Федор Свердлов, сост. (Москва: Научно-просветительский центр “Холокост”, 1996), 55; Щупак, ред., *Праведники народів світу*, 12.

<sup>21</sup> Илья Альтман, *Холокост и еврейское сопротивление на оккупированной территории СССР* (Москва: Фонд “Холокост”, 2002); *Пам’яті українців, які рятували євреїв під час Другої світової війни*, 17.

As an example, I would like to cite another case in which a Ukrainian family in the Zhytomyr region, guided by Christian beliefs, saved the family of a future well-known Jewish figure. “My mother was a teenager when her entire extended family was killed,” says Alex Dukhovny, Chief Rabbi of the Association of Progressive Judaism,

Her father was the last rabbi of Ruzhyn. He was killed two months before the liberation of this Jewish town. My mother and her younger sister Bronia survived. They survived because they were saved by the Ukrainian family of Volynets, who are now among the Righteous Among the Nations. If it were not for this Ukrainian family, I would not be standing before you, because my mother would not be alive.<sup>22</sup>

Thanks to this Ukrainian family, Fania, Eva and Yevsei (Shika) Dukhovny, as well as Bronia Kravchynska (Dukhovna) were rescued. In 1999, their rescuers – Vasyl Volynets, Oleksandra Volynets (Parkhomiyuk), Kateryna Volynets (Hladyshko) and their parents Agafiya Volynets and Fedir Volynets – were awarded the title of “Righteous Among the Nations.”<sup>23</sup> Vasyl Volynets is the grandfather of my friend, from whom I first learned about this history.

In many of these cases, the religious beliefs of the rescuers played an important role. In their self-sacrificial deeds, at the risk of their own lives, to save persecuted fellow citizens of Jewish nationality, many Ukrainians were guided by the Gospel commandments of mercy, sacrifice, and love of neighbour. This aspect is still the least studied. However, there is reason to believe that the religious feelings and beliefs of many Ukrainian Righteous were key to their choices and actions. And here we can really talk about both the heroic deeds

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<sup>22</sup> “Праведники народів Світу. Український вимір,” *Грінченко-інформ*, дата звернення 10 вересня, 2021, <http://grinchenko-inform.kubg.edu.ua/pravednyky-narodiv-svitu-ukrayinskyj-vymir/>.

<sup>23</sup> “Волинець Федор, Волинець Агафья и их дети: Волинец Василий, Пархомюк (Волинец) Александра, Гладышко (Волинец) Катерина,” *Yad Vashem*, дата обращения 10 сентября, 2021, <https://righteous.yadvashem.org/?searchType=all&language=ru&itemId=4045138&ind=268>; “Волинець Василь,” *Портрети. Електронний банк даних про українців, які в роки Другої світової війни рятували життя євреїв*, дата звернення 10 вересня, 2021, <https://портрети.com.ua/pravedniki/render.php?lastname=Волинець%20Василь&param=1>.

of righteousness and holiness. After all, we see vivid examples of how believing Christians confirmed their faith with real deeds, often even at the cost of their own lives.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of sources and the irretrievable loss of the eyewitnesses themselves, it is very difficult to determine these inner motives of religious consciousness that influenced the deeds of the saviours.

Only a small percentage of testimonies unequivocally attest to the religious component of such a deed. In particular, it has been established that at least **65** Ukrainians recognised as “Righteous Among the Nations” were Orthodox Christians by religion. Among them are **9** Orthodox priests. Another 45 righteous are listed simply as Christians. There were also many Greek Catholics, Baptists, Evangelicals, Roman Catholics, and Adventists. However, in the case of more than **70 per cent** of Ukrainian “righteous,” their religion is unfortunately unknown.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, we can assume that the number of Orthodox, Greek Catholics and other believers among the Ukrainian Righteous is many times greater. This is the subject of a separate future study.

It is known that the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, led by Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky, played a significant role in saving the Jews of Lviv and Galicia. Between 1942 and 1944, the head of the UGCC saved about two hundred Jews. In particular, the monks of the Assumption Univ Monastery and other monasteries of the UGCC took part in the rescue operations.<sup>25</sup> However, Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky has not yet been recognised as a “Righteous Among the Nations.”

Among the Ukrainian Orthodox clergy who saved Jews from death during the Holocaust, the most famous is the feat of the Kyivan

<sup>24</sup> According to the data as of January 1, 2016. See: Щупак, ред., *Праведники народів світу*.

<sup>25</sup> “Як монахи студити Святоуспенської Унівської лаври у часи Голокосту рятували єврейських дітей,” *Католицький оглядач*, дата звернення 23 липня, 2023, <http://catholic-news.org.ua/yak-monahi-studiti-svyatouspenskoji-univskoyi-lavri-u-chasi-golokostu-ryatuvali-ievreyskih-ditey>; “Проти течії. Як українські монахи-студити євреїв рятували (інтерв’ю Юрія Скіри),” *Синод Єпископів УГКЦ*, дата звернення 1 серпня, 2020, <https://synod.ugcc.ua/data/proti-techii-yak-ukraynski-monahy-studyty-vreyv-ryatuvaly-3688/>.

priest, Father Oleksii Hlaholev. However, this was not an isolated example. Among the officially recognised “Righteous Among the Nations” are also Ukrainian Orthodox priests Fr Mykhailo Dronchak, Fr Fedir Zaviriukha and Fr Volodymyr Dlozewsky from Vinnytsia region, Fr Mykhailo Klebanovsky from Donbas, Fr Ignatii Hrohul’ from Rivne region, Fr Savelii Tsybulsky (Tsybulnikov) from Kherson region, Fr Ioan Shcherbanovych from Bukovyna, and Fr Jozsef Cse-drik from Transcarpathia. These are only those who were officially recognised as “Righteous Among the Nations.” And there are many more whose names and deeds have been forgotten and need to be searched for, researched, and restored. Among them are Archpriest Mykola Romensky from Kremenchuk in the Poltava region, Fr Tri-fon Bostaniuk from the Odesa region, priests I. Chubynsky (Varovy-chi village in the Kyiv region), K. Omelianovsky, S. Ozhehovsky, M. Herasymov, I. Shmyhol from the Kherson region, M. Rybchyn-sky, F. Samuilyk, E. Hei-rokh from the Rivne region, and others.<sup>26</sup> Abbess Flavia, the abbess of the Frolov Convent Monastery in Kyiv, and her sisters also hid several Jewish children.<sup>27</sup> The same facts are known about the sisters of the Trinity Brailov Monastery in Vinnytsia region and others. Representatives of both the autocephalous and autonomous Orthodox churches of Ukraine took part in the rescue of Jews.

Unfortunately, no thorough and systematic research has yet been conducted on the role of Orthodox clergy and believers in saving the Jewish population from the Holocaust during World War II. Let’s hope that other steps, searches, and studies will follow, which will help to discover new names and deeds of our true righteous.

The feat of rescue is a multidimensional phenomenon. Rescue episodes depended on many subjective factors. For some rescuers, one of the motives was faith in the Almighty and the desire to follow His

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<sup>26</sup> Михайло Коваль, *Україна. 1939–1945: Маловідомі і непрочитані сторінки історії* (Київ, 1995), 103; Михаил Шкаровский, *Холокост и православная церковь* (Москва: Вече, 2016), 253–265; Вадим Якунин, *Вклад Русской Православной Церкви в победу над фашизмом и изменение государственно-церковных отношений в годы Великой отечественной войны 1941–1945 гг.* (Самара, 2002), 222–223, 231.

<sup>27</sup> И. Ковтун, “Русская Православная Церковь,” в *Холокост на территории СССР. Энциклопедия* (Москва, 2011), 881–882.

commandments. Very often, when studying the practical side of rescue, the main thing is overlooked – what made people risk themselves and their loved ones for the sake of others. In fact, in the context of the current Russian-Ukrainian war, which has lasted much longer than anyone could have imagined in 2014, Ukrainian society is facing not only objectively difficult material trials, but also moral exhaustion and the risk of despair. Therefore, attention to and reflection on the experience of the past, in particular the phenomenon of solidarity with victims and self-sacrifice, are becoming increasingly relevant and important.

Their deeds deserve to be remembered, honoured and imitated. For all of us, they are an example of true Christian righteousness and holiness. They are an example of the Gospel commandments of love for neighbours, mercy, selflessness and self-sacrifice, even at the cost of their own lives. After all, as the Gospel says: “No one has greater love than this to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (John 15:13).

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