

<https://doi.org/10.18778/1644-857X.21.02.11>

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Charitable activities of Kyiv eparchy monasteries and convents in the second half of the 19th century – the early 20th century

STRESZCZENIE

Działalność charytatywna klasztorów eparchii kijowskiej w drugiej połowie XIX i w początkach XX stulecia

Artykuł dotyczy działalności charytatywnej klasztorów eparchii kijowskiej w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX w. Pokazuje, że działalność dobroczynna Cerkwi prawosławnej osiągnęła swój szczyt w okresie poreformacyjnym. Polegała ona na zaopatrzeniu szkół, szpitali, sierocińców, przytułków i hoteli dla ubogich i pielgrzymów. Kijowskie eparchie klasztorne: a) rozdzielały jałmużnę, organizowały bezpłatne obiady, udzielały pomocy materialnej i medycznej, b) zajmowały się sprawami oświaty poprzez zakładanie szkół parafialnych, c) wspierały przytulki, pomagając chorym, samotnym starszym ludziom, osobom specjalnej troski i chorym psychicznie. Na początku I wojny światowej kijowskie klasztory eparchiczne aktywnie zaangażowały się w niesienie pomocy ludności oraz zakładanie i utrzymywanie przytułków dla dzieci (sierot) poległych żołnierzy. Takim dzieciom zapewniono należytą opiekę i terminową pomoc lekarską. Instytucje charytatywne na terenie kijowskich klasztorów eparchii działały kosztem środków pochodzących z ich działalności gospodarczej oraz darowizn od osób prywatnych. Klasztory eparchii kijowskiej obejmowały największą liczbę szpitali i przytułków ze wszystkich funkcjonujących na terenie ówczesnej guberni kijowskiej.

Słowa kluczowe: Cerkiew prawosławna, eparchia kijowska, klasztor, konwent, dobroczynność, przytułek, szpital, schronisko



Received: 2022-03-31. Verified: 2022-04-02. Revised: 2022-08-23. Accepted: 2022-10-04

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with charitable activities of Kyiv eparchy monasteries and convents during the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century. It shows that charitable activities of the Orthodox church reached its peak in the post-reform period. The charitable activities within the specified time frame lay in the provision of schools, hospitals, orphanages, almshouses, and hotels for the poor and pilgrims. Kyiv eparchy monasteries and convents a) distributed alms, organized free lunches, provided material and medical assistance, b) handled education issues by establishing parish schools, c) supported almshouses by aiding sick people, lonely elderly people, people with special needs, and the mentally ill. At the beginning of World War I, Kyiv eparchy monasteries and convents became actively involved in the provision of assistance to the population, as well as the establishment and maintenance of shelters for children (orphans) of fallen soldiers. Such children were provided with proper care and timely medical assistance. Charitable institutions at the premises of Kyiv eparchy monasteries and convents operated at the expense of funds received from their economic activities, as well as donations from private individuals. Kyiv eparchy monasteries and convents comprised the greatest number of hospitals and almshouses of all those operating in the territory of the then Kyiv Governorate.

Keywords: Orthodox church, Kyiv eparchy, monastery, convent, charity, almshouse, hospital, shelter

The current situation with Russia's aggression against sovereign Ukraine, among other things, once again urges humanity to stand up for universal values; emphasizing freedom, justice, brotherhood, equality, respect, solidarity, compassion and gratitude. Once forgotten concepts and traditions are being revived, among which, without a doubt, is charity. Combat situations, as well as subsequent social, socio-economic and political processes, lead to such negative phenomena as orphan hood, refugees, unemployment, begging, as well as loss of relatives, property, landmarks, professional and personal stability. All this forces Ukrainian authorities and Ukrainians to make every effort to defend their country while working on the revival of its economy and creating conditions for improving the welfare of the population. This critical situation pressures one to turn to past experiences related to the provision of regular practical assistance, such as charity and care, to socially disadvantaged groups. A detailed study of socially significant accomplishments in Ukraine's historical past and the intellectual achievements of its best representatives will accelerate Ukrainian society's progress towards civilized forms of life.

The history of charitable activity in Ukraine is almost inextricably linked with Christianity. The etymology of the word "charity" has its roots in the words "act for good". This is how believers see

the way to God, through faith, deeds, church and social service. Charity and almsgiving have always been the main foundations of Ukrainian society. A review of charitable activities within the specified time frame can help clarify the full range of their influence on social and spiritual life in Ukraine and identify mechanisms promoting the financial independence of these institutions and their implementation of social programmes in today's conditions.

Soviet policy towards the Orthodox Church and its institutions during the seven decades of the 20th century created a crisis of spirituality in society and detached it from traditional moral principles formed for centuries under the influence of Orthodoxy. One of the important objectives of nation-building is to restore the treasures and traditions of the Ukrainian people mutilated by Russia's current aggression and Bolshevik ideology. Only a careful study of how to implement the norms of Christian ethics, which has always manifested itself in charity, will help overcome the crisis of spirituality, avoid mistakes and recognize its importance as a crucial area of national consciousness and civic responsibility of Ukrainians towards unity.

A detailed analysis of recent publications shows that the charitable activities of Kyiv eparchy monasteries and convents during the second half of the 19th century – the early 20th century has not been properly studied yet. The charitable activities of Orthodox monasteries and convents in the eparchy of Kyiv is only infrequently mentioned by historians of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine. V. Vechersky¹ addresses the problem of charity and cultural education activities of Christian monasteries and convents in Ukraine, including Kyiv eparchy monasteries and convents in the general context. Other scholars (M. Dehtiarov², O. Kryzhanovska³, N. Lavrinenko⁴) briefly point to pioneer activities of Orthodox monasteries and convents in the eparchy of Kyiv among the stories of individual monasteries and convents. However, in exploring the history of individual monasteries and convents as well as monasticism in Ukraine, they did not aim to provide a complete description of charitable activities within the specified time frame.

¹ V. Vechersky, *Ukrainski monastyri*, Kyiv 2008.

² M. Dehtiarov, A. Reutov, *Mykhailivskiy Zolotoverkhyi monastyr*, Kyiv 1999.

³ O. Kryzhanovska, *Kyievo-Florivskiy (Voznesenskiy) zhinochyi monastyr v dokumentakh ta materialakh XVI – pochatku XX st.: monohrafiia*, Kyiv 2001.

⁴ N. Lavrinenko, *Hetmanskiy Pustynno-Mykolaivskiy Medvedivskiy monastyr*, Cherkasy 2012.

This article is an attempt to highlight the charitable activities of Orthodox monasteries and convents in the eparchy of Kyiv between the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century. An in-depth study of archival materials and published documents will allow one to expand the coverage of various issues related to the charitable activities of Orthodox monasticism in the eparchy of Kyiv in different periods of its history.

The role of monasteries and convents in the life of Ukrainian society was not limited to religious and moral influence on believers. Their closest contacts with the world progressed due to social service in monasteries and convents. The charitable activities of the Orthodox Church and its monasteries and convents much depended on the imperial policy of Tsarist Russia, which used a unifying approach to management. This policy was determined by the orders of the Holy Synod and eparchy administration and demonstrated certain features of charitable activity at the time. Even though these features were more evident in the development of religious institutions, the social aspect of charity was not a priority. At the same time, there were representatives of wealthy civil servants who occasionally engaged in charity work. The charitable activities of monasteries, convents and the clergy were mainly motivated by moral and ethical factors. In accordance with the orders of the Synod or eparchy administration, it lay in donations of certain amounts for various aspects: the construction of church buildings, the provisioning of parish schools, and the fulfilment of social needs. All these activities played a significant role in the lives of the poor.

There was a different attitude towards charity in society and among government officials. In the late 19th century, the Chief Prosecutor of the Holy Synod, K. Pobedonostsev, was quite critical of public charity, which was quite widespread at the time. He believed it was only an attempt to soothe one's conscience on the part of individual members of society or institutions. He wrote, "the institution exists and operates, like any other, under regulations and statutes; and one, with one's conscience, feelings or will lives on one's own, freely, and any sadness that would spoil one's life, infringe on one's freedom or take away one's free time, one inevitably associates with institutions"⁵.

⁵ K. Pobedonostsev, *Velykaya lozh nashego vremeni*, Moskva 1993, pp. 171–172.

Owing to radical changes in socio-economic relations after the abolition of serfdom in the second half of the 19th century, the majority of the Russian Empire's population failed to adapt to new living conditions and found themselves in a difficult financial situation. In these difficult conditions, society relied on the charity of churches, monasteries and convents. Indeed, it was the monasteries and convents that assisted wounded soldiers, the sick, orphans and the poor⁶. The decree of April 6, 1866 offered the founders of new monasteries and convents "to combine charitable and educational purposes with the comforts of a solitary monastic life"⁷. According to this decree, convents began to organize schools, hospitals, orphanages, almshouses, and hotels for the poor. Compared to monasteries, convents were more crowded but also poorer. In 1885, there were 330 monks and novices in 13 monasteries (excluding the monastery of Kyiv Pechersk Lavra, which then accommodated 247 monks and 874 novices) and 426 nuns and novices in 5 convents in the territory of the eparchy of Kyiv⁸.

It must be noted that the charitable activities of the Orthodox church reached its peak in the post-reform period. The abolition of serfdom led to feudal guardianship. People gained more freedom which inevitably increased their responsibility for their own lives. However, not everyone managed to adapt to new living conditions and enjoy long-awaited freedom. Often, only charitable activities could support such people. Despite the already established system of social assistance and public care at that time, charitable and educational activities of monasteries and convents in the second half of the 19th century – the early 20th century remained particularly relevant.

Individual members of the "black" clergy realized that the previous patriarchal form that united believers by organizing food for the poor at the expense of donations from the rich no longer fully corresponded to the significantly changed living conditions. Improving the lives of the population by expanding charity distinctly mitigated existing social contradictions and strengthened people's faith in Orthodoxy, goodness and justice.

⁶ P. Georgievskiy, *Prizrenie bednykh i blagotvoritelnost*, S.-Peterburg 1894, p. 28.

⁷ P. Zyryanov, *Russkie monastyri i monashestvo v XIX i XX vv.*, Moskva 1999, p. 138.

⁸ *Vsepoddanneyshtiy otchet Ober-prokurora Svyateyshego sinoda K. Pobedonostseva po vedomstvu pravoslavnogo ispovedaniya za 1885 god*, Moskva 1887, pp. 1-2.

Charity had become one of the priorities for individual monasteries and convents. In this regard, one can identify the following main forms of charity on the part of Kyiv eparchy monasteries and convents within the specified time frame: the organization and collection of donations; the establishment of medical and educational institutions at the premises of monasteries and convents; the provision of assistance to soldiers and members of their families; and the maintenance of almshouses.

After the abolition of serfdom, monasteries and convents expanded their activities in the field of public education and successfully engaged in social and charitable activities. Interestingly, charitable activity took various forms. Relying on the dogmas of grace and charity of pilgrims, monasteries and convents distributed alms, organized free lunches, provided material and medical assistance, handled education issues by establishing parish schools, supported almshouses by aiding sick people, lonely elderly people, people with special needs, and the mentally ill .

Shelters for children and almshouses for the elderly became the main types of parish care. Shelters for children aimed to support orphans or children abandoned by their parents. Moreover, they sought to “maintain or improve their health by creating facilities that would meet normal living conditions, including adequate nutrition and proper care. Besides, it was important to provide them with primary education and awaken, develop and consolidate their moral feelings, love for work, order, obedience through a careful upbringing and constant supervision. Finally, it was essential to teach them different skills and enrol them in other schools, workshops or places of service, thus providing these children with material support for life out of shelters”⁹.

In the late 19th century, the eparchies Kyiv and Halych were located on the territory of Kyiv Governorate, including 20 monasteries, 1 episcopal house and 6 convents. The following types of charitable institutions can be distinguished in the structure of Kyiv eparchy monasteries and convents: hospitals, almshouses, shelters, and schools. They provided assistance to the clergy and the laity.

Hospitals and almshouses at the premises of monasteries and convents were first established to provide medical care to their residents. However, the network of such hospitals expanded very

⁹ *Antologiya sotsialnoy raboty*, vol. I, ed. M.V. Firsov, Moskva 1994, p. 103.

much during the second half of the 19th century – the early 20th century and began to provide free medical care to local peasants, pilgrims and travellers.

At that time, almshouses were special institutions designed for homeless lay people with special needs. In turn, shelters were intended for the clergy (the elderly, widows, and orphans). Both types of institutions worked on a permanent basis. Houses and hotels for travellers offered temporary accommodation for pilgrims.

It must be noted that almshouses and hospitals operated mainly at the expense of monasteries or convents which were engaged in economic activities and only somewhat depended on the treasury. Men of the cloth, as well as wealthy members of society at that time, played a principal role in the establishment of charitable institutions. Most of the hospitals and almshouses of all those operating in the Kyiv Governorate were part of monasteries and convents.

In the second half of the 19th century, Kyiv Pechersk Lavra was a monastery that housed a hotel for pilgrims, an 80-bed hospital with both men's and women's wards. Countess Anna Orlova-Chesmenska organized a free refectory for poor pilgrims there¹⁰. Lavra also housed the Trinity Monastery with a 32-bed hospital and a chemist's (since 1842).

The history of charitable activities of Kytaievo Holy Trinity Monastery, founded in the middle of the 12th century, is closely related to Kyiv Pechersk Lavra. With the spread of spiritual personnel to the territory of Ukraine in 1786, Kytaievo Holy Trinity Monastery became a place of refuge for all old and sick Lavra monks, as well as a burial place for the entire Lavra fraternity. An 80-person hotel for pilgrims was built nearby. The monastic refectory opened its doors to the poor and needy pilgrims¹¹.

St. Michael's Vydubychi Monastery in Kyiv housed a hospital for poor elderly clergy. Also, there was a shelter for 28 orphaned boys and children from poor families, as well as a parish school that taught the ABCs, reading, God's law, history, geography, grammar, simple and part singing, calligraphy and crafts (carpentry, roofing,

¹⁰ L. Denisov, *Pravoslavnye monastyri Rossiyskoy imperii. Polnyi spisok vsekh 1105 nyne sushchestvuyushchikh v 75 guberniyakh i oblastyakh Rossii (i 2 inostrannykh gosudarstvakh) muzhskikh i zhenskikh monastyrey, arhieryskikh domov i zhenskikh obshchin*, Moskva 1908, p. 294.

¹¹ *Kitaevskaya pustyn bliz Kiev*, "Kievskie eparkhialnye vedomosti", 1 VIII 1867, otdel vtoroy, No. 15, p. 465.

painting, and tailoring)¹². The Trinity Monastery of St. Jonas, founded in 1868 by monk Jonas in the heart of Kyiv, also housed a similar school for 30 orphaned boys¹³.

Convents were more concerned with service to others. For instance, Kyiv Vvedensky Convent, which was founded in the heart of Kyiv (in Pechersk) in 1889, was remarkable for its charitable activities. According to a decree of the Holy Synod as of June 21–23, 1889, it was decided to establish a convent under the name “Pokrovsky” at the premises of the estate of Grand Duchess Alexandra Petrovna. The estate was located in Lukianivka, the historical area in Kyiv¹⁴. The Grand Duchess herself took her vows under the name of Anastasia. There is an entry in the diary of Tsar Nicholas II: “We met Aunt Sasha, who came in a nun’s robe with a small hat on her head. What an amazing woman! Cheerful, talkative, despite her clothes”¹⁵.

The estate had 6 acres of land with buildings. The Charter of the Holy Synod to the owner of the estate as of July 12, 1889, determined the use of the property transferred to the convent. The territory of the estate housed a temple and a large house which was decided to be used as both cells and accommodation of widows and young novices. In 12 other houses, it was planned to establish a free hospital, a chemist’s, a free school for girls, a sewing shop, a hotel for pilgrims and travellers, as well as kitchens, protheses, laundries, greenhouses, apiaries, a farmyard with cattle, and stables. All these buildings and social infrastructure were maintained at the expense of the Grand Duchess. This was her wish, recorded in the resolution of the Holy Synod and the Charter given to her¹⁶.

Owing to the efforts of nun Anastasia, Kyiv Vvedensky Pokrovsky Convent housed a 100-plus-bed hospital for the poor patients of all Christian denominations, an out-patient clinic that provided

¹² Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi istorichnyi arkhiv Ukrainy v misti Kyievi (Central State Historical Archives of Ukraine in Kyiv) [hereinafter: TsDIAK], f. [repository] 30, op. [specification] 1, spr. [file] 1183, ark. [sheet] 19.

¹³ L. Denisov, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

¹⁴ *Ob utverzhdenii v gorode Kieve zhenskogo Pokrovskogo monastyrya v usadbe Ee Vysochestva Velikoy knyagini Aleksandry Petrovny*, “Tserkovnye vedomosti” 1889, No. 27, p. 264.

¹⁵ *Dnevnik imperatora Nikolaya II*: [1890–1906 g.g.], Berlin 1923, p. 87.

¹⁶ *Gramota Svyateyshego Sinoda na imya Velikoy knyagini Aleksandry Petrovny na uchrezhdenie sego monastyrya*, “Tserkovnye vedomosti” 1889, No. 27, p. 282.

medication to the laity, two shelters for the terminally ill and a shelter for the blind. In August 1909, by order of Tsar Nicholas II, it was decided to allocate 80,000 rubles from the fund for unforeseen emergency needs for the construction and equipping of the surgical department at the hospital of Kyiv Pokrovsky Convent¹⁷. Importantly, the treatment and care of patients were free of charge. All of the nursing staff consisted of the convent's nuns. The convent's hospital, which employed about forty doctors, was considered to be the best in Kyiv. Critically ill patients were sent there. There was also a parish school with dormitories for students.

The Holy Synod determined the convent's income, which it could receive from the sale of church candles, the collection of nuns' allowance and money received from religious ceremonies, as well as the income from donations by the wealthy laity, both money and property, which became the inviolable capital of the convent during the Duchess's lifetime. The newly established convent was de jure transferred to the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Kyiv and de facto enjoyed the right of self-government, which was organized for him during his life by the Grand Duchess herself through electing the eldest of all the nuns. The cohabitation of nuns in the convent relied on the rules of ancient convent life.

In March 1897, at the request of the Holy Synod, in response to a request from the Chief Prosecutor, five medical positions were approved at charitable medical institutions in Kyiv Pokrovsky Convent, namely, one chief doctor and four resident doctors¹⁸.

Subsequently, there appeared to be a need to increase the number of medical positions. On January 6, 1903, the decision of the State Council was approved by the highest decree of Tsar Nicholas II in response to the request of the Chief Prosecutor of the Holy Synod on the introduction of the position of a coroner and two resident doctors. It follows that the free hospital and out-patient clinic for the laity at the premises of Kyiv Pokrovsky Convent were under the supervision of the Governor of Kyiv and the Medical Department of the Kyiv Governorate. According to the then-requirements for such medical institutions, the chief doctor of the hospital

¹⁷ *Vysochayshee povelenie ot 7 avgusta 1909 g. o vydelenii deneg na stroitel'stvo khirurgicheskogo otdeleniya*, "Tserkovnye vedomosti" 1909, No. 40, p. 359.

¹⁸ *Ob utverzhdenii dolzhnostey starshogo vracha i 4 vrachey-ordinatorov pri blagotvoritelnykh zavedeniyakh Kievskogo Pokrovskogo zhenskogo monastyrya*, "Tserkovnye vedomosti" 1897, No. 10, p. 81.

was expected to regularly submit relevant information about the state of the medical business and the number of patients in the Kyiv Governorate and prepare annual reports. Such medical institutions operated under the statute approved by the Chief Prosecutor of the Holy Synod in agreement with the Minister of the Interior¹⁹. In September 1903, by the highest order of the civilian community at the Orthodox Church Department, V. Yaroshevsky, a doctor at the court of Grand Duke Petr Nikolaevich and a college assessor, was appointed as chief doctor of the Free Hospital for Patients at Kyiv Pokrovsky Convent²⁰. As early as May 1907, he was awarded the title of honorary life physician at the court of His Imperial Majesty²¹.

In February 1910, the State Council and the State Duma approved the Law on Granting Pension Rights to Hospital Doctors at Kyiv Pokrovsky Convent²².

In addition to charitable activities, monasteries and convents continued to promote literacy and attached special importance to the spread of education, especially among women. An example is the Ascension Convent, also known as the Florivsky, located in the Kyivan neighbourhood of Podil. This convent dates back to the middle of the 16th century. Interestingly, it was rebuilt after the fire of 1811. During the reconstruction, it was decided to establish a parish school there, in which 30–40 girls studied every year. Shelters for children and almshouses for the elderly became the main types of parish care. Since 1828, the Ascension Convent housed an almshouse for sick and poor pilgrims (up to 55 places)²³.

At the premises of Mykolaiv Lebedyn Convent, located in the Chyhyryn district of the Kyiv Governorate, there was a two-class vocational school for girls, as well as two hotels for travellers and pilgrims²⁴.

In 1890, a school for peasant boys was established at Kyiv Mykhailivsky Monastery. The teaching staff of the school consisted

¹⁹ *Vysochayshie poveleniya*, "Tserkovnye vedomosti" 1897, No. 10, p. 58.

²⁰ *Vysochayshiy prikaz*, "Tserkovnye vedomosti" 1897, No. 39, p. 353.

²¹ *Imennoy Vysochajshiy ukaz*, "Tserkovnye vedomosti" 1907, No. 31, p. 212.

²² *Odobrennyi Gosudarstvennym Sovetom i Gosudarstvennoy Dumoj Zakon o predostavlenii pensionnykh prav vracham bolnitsy imeni Imperatora Nikolaya II pri Kievskom Pokrovskom zhenskom obshchezhitelnom monastyre*, "Tserkovnye vedomosti" 1910, No. 7, p. 29.

²³ L. Denisov, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 318.

of graduates from parish schools (several people from each *povit* [county]) with references from county branches of the eparchial school council. Upon completion of two years of study, they became teachers at parish schools²⁵.

According to circular decree No. 12 of the Holy Synod, as of July 27, 1888 Orthodox monasteries and convents were expected to make donations to parish schools. In particular, Kyiv eparchy monasteries and convents donated 2,100 rubles for various needs during the 1888–1889 academic year. It was a relatively decent amount in contrast to the payments made by the 37 eparchies of the Russian Empire. Their total amount was equal to 38.5 thousand rubles²⁶.

World War 1 became a new social ordeal for many countries, including the Russian Empire. In the wake of a patriotic upsurge, societies and committees that aimed to support the front, care for the sick and wounded, help the families of veterans and fallen warriors, as well as civilians affected by hostilities, began to emerge in different cities across the country. The Orthodox Church, monasteries and convents actively organized aid to the affected population. Through prayers and conversations, priests and monks strived to support the laity, instil in them an unshakable faith in victory and neutralize negative psychological effects on their perception of the world around them. They also collected donations to treat wounded soldiers and aid the families of war veterans and the disabled. Novices, monks and nuns were often recruited as brothers and sisters of mercy to transport the wounded to hospitals and infirmaries. Many monasteries and convents housed shelters for children and orphans of soldiers killed during the War.

From the beginning of World War 1, Kyiv Pokrovsky Convent cared for such orphans in a 100-seat children's shelter located at its premises. A similar orphanage was established at Kyiv Mezhyhiria Monastery. Unfortunately, it was problematic to support such a large number of children. Therefore, by order of the Kyiv Spiritual Consistory, as of February 29, 1916 the administration

²⁵ M. Musatova, *Sotsialno-blagotvoritel'naya deyatel'nost' monastyrey v kontekste kultury Rossii vtoroy poloviny XIX veka*, "Vestnik slavyanskikh kultur" 2008, No. 3–4, p. 84.

²⁶ *Spisok pozherovaniy na tserkovno-prikhodskie shkoly, postupivshikh ot monastyrey v 1888–1889 uchebnom godu, na osnovanii tsirkulyarnogo ukaza Svyateyshego sinoda ot 27 iyulya 1888 g. za № 12*, "Tserkovnye vedomosti" 1890, No. 45, p. 425.

of each monastery and convent in Kyiv was obliged to allocate fixed amounts for the needs of orphanages at Kyiv Pokrovsky Convent and Kyiv Mezhyhiria Monastery twice a year²⁷.

In such a way, the eparchial clergy, not being able to arrange shelters in parishes, organized fundraising campaigns to support orphans in monasteries and convents. Thus, the assistance of the parish clergy and the Kyiv Spiritual Consistory lay mainly in raising funds for the construction and maintenance of shelters. Even though monasteries and convents lacked funds and resources to support those in need, especially when their number increased due to deteriorating living conditions and the consequences of the war, children still received proper education and timely medical care.

Thus, the period between the second half of the 19th century – the early 20th century was a difficult and ambiguous stage in the history of charitable activities of monasteries and convents. The church's charitable activities played an essential role in society at that time and the social policy of the state. Coupled with spiritual and moral support, the charitable activities of Kyiv eparchy monasteries and convents raised the living standards of poor people and particularly vulnerable sections of the population, as well as turned monasteries and convents in the region into strongholds of literacy and medical care centres.

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