



Resolution of the Bishops Conference (Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, 19 July 2023, the Day of the Synaxis of All Saints of Radonezh)



The document adopted by the Bishops Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church on 19 July 2023.

1. The bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church led by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia assembled in the monastery of the Hegumen of the Russian Land, St. Sergius of Radonezh, give thanks to God glorified in the Holy Trinity for His all-beneficial Providence for the Church and His people, which is visibly acting even in today's hard times when *those who wish to fight have turned against Holy Rus', in a wish to divide and ruin her united people* (from the Prayer for Holy Rus').

2. The miseries endured by our peoples impel all the faithful of the Church to intensify prayers to God, to strengthen the faith in Him, to show endurance in hope for His mercy and intercession, and to grow in

love for Him and our neighbours.

3. Profound sorrow is brought by news about those who are fallen and who are wounded because of the military confrontation, about those who have been left homeless, about refugees. May the Lord give rest to the souls of all those who have been killed in today's battlefield. May He grant consolation to the aggrieved and the needy and by His bounty send all good things to meet their needs. By God's mercy many people, both the clergy and laity, state officials and ordinary workers have shown in the present situation genuine Christian love by uniting to give all possible help to the needy and afflicted. May the Lord reward them in this age and in the future.

4. With a special feeling, the participants in the Bishops Conference lift up their prayers to God for commanders and warriors. May the Lord protect them from wounds, captivity and death, from every evil, sin and untruth. And to those warriors who gave their lives on the battlefield for their faith and Motherland and those who died of wounds or tortured to death in bitter captivity - may He give them rest in His dwellings. Eternal memory be to them.

5. The warriors who participate in military action need special pastoral attention and care. The clergy who are sent for service in a zone of military actions should go through a careful preparation, while the diocesan bishops should see to it that such clergy from among those who have family should preserve their income at the parishes to which they are assigned.

Also important is the pastoral participation of the clergy in the rehabilitation of warriors who return from the territory of military actions. In accordance with the ages-old pastoral practice, the offering of the Holy Mysteries of Christ can be limited for the reason of participation in military actions to the time of confession only if the situation is considered individually and in special cases, for instance, when a warrior has committed military crimes involving people's death or when it can help to heal spiritual wounds.

6. In the Ukrainian land today, the state authority has proved to be a direct heir of the Bolshevik-theomachists as it is building up the persecution of the Orthodox Church. The faithful are driven out of churches; the hierarchy, clergy and laity are subjected to unrighteous arrests and dishonest trials; shrines are desecrated and plundered. Special bitterness is caused by the reports that attempts are made to compel the clergy and laity of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to reject God's truth and to goad them into a schism. The participants in the Bishops Conference calls to a fervent prayer for Orthodox brothers and sisters in Ukraine, for those who, contrary to the threats, slander and persecutions, seek to preserve the church unity, especially for those who have performed a deed of true confessors by raising their voices in defence of this unity. Many years of life be to Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl who is in prison now and to all hierarchs-confessors enduring penal sanctions for the faith

and the Church!

7. The Bishops Conference regrets to state that among the instruments of the political forces hostile to Orthodoxy is the leaders of the Patriarchate of Constantinople blinded by the thirst for satisfying private interests and ambitions. Having considered the Synodal Biblical-Theological Commission's conclusion "On the distortion of the Orthodox doctrine on the Church in the deeds of the Patriarchate of Constantinople hierarchy and statements of its representatives", the Bishops Conference expresses its agreement with this document's conclusion and submit it to the Holy Synod.

8. Noting that in the present disturbing situation, people have a special need for consolation and kind pastoral attention, the Bishops Conference calls upon all the bishops and priests of the Russian Orthodox Church to unabated work, advertence to parishioners, more efforts for enlightening the people, and the faithful of the Church to active participation in liturgical, social and charitable life of parish communities. The diocesan bishops are called to especial concern for the needs of the clergy and parish toilers entrusted to their care.

9. The Bishops Conference draws a special attention again to the need for a thorough preparation of candidates to holy orders. It is necessary to be done in accordance to the words of the holy apostle, *Do not be hasty in the laying on of hand* (cf. 1 Tim.5:22), to test candidates to holy orders, to prepare them properly for their field ahead and with special attention to keep an eye on the first steps of the newly ordained clerics. With satisfaction noting the continued work of the whole Church to raise the educational level of the clergy, the Bishops Conference asks the Holy Synod to consider a possibility for uniting the existing theological schools to make more affective the further work to educate and bring up pastors to be. In doing so, it is necessary to abide by the rules established by the Holy Synod (Minutes No. 112, 30 August 2019) on the assignment of graduates to the dioceses that sent them for training.

10. The participants in the Bishops Conference in the House of the Life-Giving Trinity at the sacred shrine of the Most Venerable Sergius of Radonezh, being in mutual love and like-mindedness, with faith and hope pray to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who can heal every disorder, console every sorrow and grant people His profound and inalienable peace. May the Lord and God preserve the Russian Church and all her devout servants: monks and nuns and faithful parishioners and may He grant people His abundant mercies, *Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen* (2 Pet. 3:18).