Parishioners of the canonical Church at Belichi village in Western Ukraine have to worship under rain outside their sealed church

On September 26, 2020, at the Belichi village, Ivanovichi district, Volyn Region, some OCU activists, using housebreaking instruments, tried to seize the St Michael church of a religious community of the canonical Church.

The rector of St. Michael church, Archpriest Pavel Melnik has served at the parish for over 30 years. A year ago, a few representatives of the schismatic 'Orthodox Church in Ukraine' in this village tried to persuade him to move over to a newly created church structure and transfer his church to it, but the priest refused to do it. However, this did not bring them to a stop.

In spite of the fact that actually there are more supporters of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church at Belichi then supporters of the transfer, on May 16, 2019, the regional authorities transferred the religious community of the canonical Church to the jurisdiction of the 'OCU'. 'We had a meeting of the church community in the church. Out of 177 of those present, 176 voted to remain in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The 'OCU' supporters held a meeting at the club; there were a little more than 90 people; they voted for the transfer of our community, and we were re-registered', the rector related. He said that in the documents for the regional administration to transfer the parish to the 'OCU', many forgeries were discovered.

The suit of the canonical Church's religious community aggrieved at the raiding is considered by court, the court session is fixed for October 13.

Earlier, despite that fact of legal re-registration, the schismatic structure's activists failed to disrupt worship services held by the larger church community of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church at this village. However, on September 26, after the 'OCU' supporters' failure to seize the St. Michael church, to avoid conflicts the sides agreed that the church would not be sealed until the court's decision.

According to the Information-Education Department of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with reference to the Union of Orthodox Journalists, on September 27, the feast of the Elevation of the Lord's Cross, the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church had to worship under rain outside the church.

DECR Communication Service

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