Holy Synod session minutes of September 14, 2019

On September 14, 2019, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church adopted the minutes published below after discussing it through remote connections.

Minutes No. 122

CONSIDERED: the appeal of Archbishop John (Renneteau), head of the Archdiocese of Western European Parishes of Russian Tradition, to integrate him in the Moscow Patriarchate together with the clergy and parishes who wish to follow him.

Background information:

The temporary administration over the Russian churches in Western Europe united by the presence of the Holy Synod and the Supreme Church Council was assigned in March 1921 to His Eminence Archbishop Eulogius (Georgievsky).

Due to historical circumstances, in 1931 the parishes headed by Metropolitan Eulogius were temporarily accepted as an exarchate in the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Some parishioners disagreed with that decision claiming their faithfulness to the Moscow Patriarchate and founded in Paris a parish dedicated to Three Hierarchs. Later this parish was joined by others. Consequently, these parishes became the basis for a Russian Orthodox Church Diocese of Chersonese.

In a letter to the flock in February 1931, Metropolitan Eulogius wrote, 'When the generally recognized central church authority and normal condition of life for the Russian Orthodox Church are restored, we will return to the previous status… Embarking on this path, we certainly do not tear away or break away from the Mother Russian Church. We… do not end our unity with her… It is only a temporary interval in official administrative relations'.

On August 29, 1945, Metropolitan Eulogius and his two vicars – Archbishop Vladimir and Bishop Ioann – sent to His Holiness Alexis I, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, the following letter: 'We filially ask you, covering with love our disunity with the Mother Russian Orthodox Church, to take us together with our parishes under your paternal arm in canonical unity with the whole of the Russian Orthodox Church'. On the same day, the hierarchs signed, together with Metropolitan Nikolay (Yarushevich) of Krutitsy and Kolomna who was on a visit to Paris and with the priests accompanying

him, an act which confirmed that Metropolitan Nikolay 'accomplished canonical reunion of His Eminence Metropolitan Eulogius and his vicars with the Mother Russian Orthodox Church according to the commonly accepted church rite'. On September 7, 1945, it was duly followed by a resolution of the Holy Synod: 'Having thanked the Lord God, we consider Metropolitan Eulogius and his vicars – Archbishop Vladimir and Bishop Ioann with all the 75 parishes to be reunited with the Mother Church and accepted in the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Exarchate of Western European churches to be hereinafter preserved in its existing boundaries and headed by Metropolitan Eulogius as Exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate on the grounds set forth in the respective Provision for the administration of these churches'.

Soon after the demise of Metropolitan Eulogius on August 8, 1946, a considerable part of his clergy and flock decided to reunite with the Patriarchate of Constantinople under the leadership of Archbishop (later Metropolitan) Vladimir (Tikhonitsky).

The parishes stayed, with a temporary interval, in the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople until 2018 with various designations the best known of which is the Archdiocese of Western European Parishes of Russian Tradition.

On November 27, 2018, the Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople decided to dissolve the Archdiocese.

On September 14, 2019, Archbishop John (Renneteau), head of the Archdiocese, sent a letter to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia informing him about the desire of most clergy and parishes of the Archdiocese to preserve its existence as part of the Russian Orthodox Church and asked to join the Moscow Patriarchate together with the clergy and parishes who wish to follow him. He also informed His Holiness that in the nearest future there will be an assembly of representatives of these parishes who will send to His Holiness and the Holy Synod their proposals on the canonical form of their organization.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Lord be thanked for the desire expressed by His Eminence Archbishop John (Renneteau) and most of the clergy and laity of the Archdiocese of the Western European Parishes of Russian Tradition to restore unity with the Russian Orthodox Church, seeing in it a dignified and rightful completion of overcoming church divisions abroad generated by the revolution and civil war.
2. That His Eminence Archbishop John (Renneteau) be accepted in the jurisdiction of the Moscow

Patriarchate with the title ‘of Dubna’ as well as all the clergy under his leadership who wish it and parishes which will express the same desire.

3. That Archbishop John of Dubna be entrusted with governing the aforementioned parishes.
4. That after an appeal of the assembly of parish representatives is received, an additional consideration be given to define the canonical form of their organization on the basis of historically developed special features of diocesan and parochial administration as well as liturgical and pastoral traditions established by Metropolitan Eulogius taking into account the conditions of the life of the Church’s part that he headed in Western Europe.

Patriarchal Press Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/46117/