



## **Metropolitan Meletios of Carthage: All Local Churches share Metropolitan Onufry's anguish for the unity of his flock**

On 25 June 2019, Metropolitan Meletios of Carthage delivered an address at the celebration of the Name Day of His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine with wishes of long years of life, physical and moral strength and conveyed greetings from His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, with wishes of longevity, physical health, moral strength and serene pastoral ministry for the good of the pious Ukrainian people.

He said, addressing Metropolitan Onufry: "Our joy is multiplied through the presence of brothers from most of the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches. On the one hand, their presence announces the bond of love in the Truth which unites our Churches as members of the one Body of Christ, and on the other hand, proves the particularly great respect and appreciation of the broader Orthodox Church in the world to You personally."

Metropolitan Meletios continued to say that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was experiencing trials and tribulations and added: "The presence of all of us near you has a single purpose. As brothers we are here to support you, to give you courage and to assert that all the local Churches share your anguish for the unity of your Flock."

The archpastor mentioned that previously "the peace of the Church was thwarted by the propaganda of the altered Christianity of the West or the warlike fury of state atheism." He continued, saying: "In the present, the temptations are much more bitter because, unfortunately, they come from brothers in the faith and in hope."

"Rest assured that the Apostolic Church of Alexandria wishes and prays and does what is possible in fraternal cooperation and care with the other Holy Primates, in the framework of ecclesiastical tradition and order and the Pan-Orthodox society and unity, in order to evade temptation and restore the peace of Christ in the Church of Ukraine, and in the Universal Orthodox Church," Metropolitan Meletios added, addressing the head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

As the representative of the Church of Alexandria emphasized, "a necessary prerequisite for solving this problem is the absolute understanding and admission that the Church is not an arena of geopolitical strategies, nor a space of political interference and exploitation of personal aspirations, primacy, or vindictiveness." "The Church is the supreme place for the absolute ministry to humans with the ultimate purpose of educating each of the faithful, regarding Christ and Him Crucified," the archpastor added.

"The direct, explicit and expressive, all-pervasive assurance of all the local Churches on the organized unity and historical dependence of the Holy Metropolis of Kiev with the Patriarchate of Moscow, as the relationship of the Vineyard to the vine in evangelical parallelism, is confirmed festively and absolutely

by the ecclesiastical consciousness of the millions of Ukrainian Orthodox faithful who, despite the adverse conditions of the last few days, the persecutions, the prophecies, the seizures of the Churches and so on which they are enduring, remain steadfast to the Mother Church, and to you, Your Beatitude Brother Onufry,” Metropolitan Meletios also said and noted that nonetheless, “the tree of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine remains evergreen and bears fruit, because it has been watered and continues to be watered with the blood and tears of thousands of its children, martyrs and venerable ones, who, despite adversity, remain faithful to their Church.”

The guest from the Orthodox Church of Alexandria reminded the audience of the words of His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria addressed to the Ukrainian Orthodox faithful during his visit to Odessa last year: “Remain in the Orthodox Faith and in the Canonical Church. The Patriarch of Alexandria Saint Peter saw the robe of Christ torn. This robe has remained bloody for so many centuries. Keep this robe of Orthodoxy in your hearts. In Ukraine, this blessed Orthodox country, the Canonical Church exists. Our Blessed brother Onufry exists. He is a blessed man of God.” He encouraged them to keep up their courage as “it is a cloud which will pass by quickly.”

*DECR Communication Service*

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Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/46260/>