



Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America reaffirms statement regarding External Affairs in Ukraine

In response to the report on External Relations given by Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky at its May 2019 Spring Session the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America issued the following statement, which appears below.

Statement of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America

On January 28, 2019, the Holy Synod issued a pastoral letter to its flock on the Situation in Ukraine. At this our Spring Meeting, May 7-10, 2019, we re-affirm this letter. Once again we express our deep sorrow at the current ecclesiastical situation. We lament especially the rupture in communion between the Church of Moscow and the Church of Constantinople as a cause of great distress.

As we have consistently stated, the Holy Synod desires and intends to maintain full communion with all the universally recognized autocephalous Orthodox Churches. We exhort the clergy and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America fervently to offer prayers that the unity and communion of Orthodox Christians in Ukraine be restored, that all schisms be resolved according to the canonical tradition and discipline of the Church, and that the suffering of Orthodox faithful of Ukraine, who bear the brunt of these ecclesiastical difficulties, comes to an end. We look to a Pan-Orthodox solution to this current crisis, since it affects all the Orthodox Churches.

In response to the current challenges, the Holy Synod seeks only to follow the Fathers of the Church who insist that those who hold identical doctrines, all those who confess the faith of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, remain united. Nothing can be more pleasing to the Lord Who yearned for the unity of His disciples than to behold His faithful people, separated from one another by so vast a diversity of places, history, cultures, and languages, yet bound by the unity of love in the One Body of Christ. Conversely, nothing pleases the Evil One more than discouraging the faithful from gathering into unity with the Lord, instead scattering them to disunity.

As the pastors entrusted with the flock of the Orthodox Church in America, we cannot stand by idly and allow the Orthodox faithful to be scattered and divided into factions. For many years the Orthodox Church in America has held firm the faith of the Apostles, the faith of the Fathers, the faith of the Orthodox, the faith that makes fast the inhabited world. In our Churches, Chapels, monasteries,

seminaries, and institutions throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico, our communities give glory, honor, and worship to the one God and Father, to our Holy Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Synod oversees Church life, ministering to the flock entrusted to it by the grace of God, with all canonical order and in fidelity to the tradition of the Church. At every level of ecclesial experience, our Church seeks to resolve its internal problems in a conciliar manner with the fullness of the Church according to the tradition it has received. The Orthodox Church in America gives thanks to God for the great blessings he has given us, and also to the communion he has allowed us to maintain through our common faith with the other local Orthodox Churches.

The Holy Synod urges its faithful zealously to count all things secondary to the unity to which the Church is called. Above all, we exhort all members of the Church to be solicitous for the unity of Christ's Holy Orthodox Church in America and throughout the world, lest, becoming divided, she become weakened in her task of proclaiming the Gospel to the ends of the universe.

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