Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) explains why he disagrees with Patriarch Bartholomew's decision on Ukraine

Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware) of Diokleia, professor at Oxford University, chairman of t*he board of directors of the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies in Cambridge, and Honorary President of the Orthodox Association of Theological Schools (Oxford, UK), disagrees with the decision of Patriarch Bartholomew to interfere in the church affairs in Ukraine and believes the way out of the situation lies in a pan-Orthodox discussion. A hierarch of the Church of Constantinople, he stated this in his interview to the Ukrainian Inter TV channel as reported by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church information-education department.*

'I believe that today's situation in Ukraine is extremely serious and affects not only the Orthodox Christians in Ukraine but the Orthodox Church in its entirety", the archpastor stressed.

He noted that although the Patriarchate of Constantinople granted, as it maintains, autocephaly to 'the Orthodox Church of Ukraine', it is not recognized by either Moscow or any other Orthodox Church.

'No Orthodox Church has supported the Ecumenical Patriarchate's decision', Metropolitan Kallistos pointed out.

His Eminence called to mind that the Moscow Patriarchate broke off the Eucharistic communion with the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

'From our point of view as Constantinople, we have not broken the Eucharistic communion with anyone, but the situation remains very serious', His Eminence continued, 'Therefore, according to my opinion –not that of the Patriarchate – with all due respect to Patriarch Bartholomew, I disagree with his decision'.

The archpastor explained his position: 'It is clear to me that Ukraine has been a part of the Russian Church for over 330 years. This is a fact of history and we cannot change the past. This is why I do not believe it is right for the Patriarch of Constantinople to interfere in the affairs of a territory which is a part of the Russian Church'.

Reflecting further upon the situation, the hierarch revealed that he 'was deeply concerned over the use

of force and convinced that decisions cannot be found through violence and oppression'.

'In my opinion, a disaster and scandal can be provoked, for instance, by a forcible eviction of the monks of the Kiev Laura of the Caves or the Pochaev Monastery. I hope and pray that this may not happen', he said.

In his opinion, a difficult situation can be improved through negotiations. 'I have no clear idea of how to make the next step a better one; however, it is my conviction that the decision should not be found through the use of force. The situation should be improved through negotiations. Therefore I hope that the problems in Ukraine will be discussed at an open meeting of the Orthodox Church'.

'It is even possible to convene again the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church, which took place in the Island of Crete in 2016. Unfortunately, the Russian Church was not represented that time; however there is a possibility for convening the Council again. I hope that by God's mercy the Russian Church will be present too', he suggested.

Metropolitan Kallistos called to mind that 'we call the Orthodox Church a Church of reconciliation, a catholic Church, and catholicity implies respect for each other and ability to listen each other'.

'Therefore, let us talk with each other frankly, honestly and with love of Christ', he urged.

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