



Vinnitsa people accord solemn welcome to newly appointed diocesan bishop, Archbishop Varsonofy



On December 18, 2018, the clergy and parishioners of churches in the city of Vinnitsa, as well as the abbots and representatives of the three diocesan monasteries, gave a solemn welcome to the newly appointed ruling bishop of Vinnitsa, Archbishop Varsonofy.

The meeting took place in the square at the church of the Epiphany of the Vinnitsa Community of the Elevation of the Cross. Archbishop Varsonofy of Vinnitsa and Bar was accompanied by vicars of the Metropolis of Kiev, Archbishop Damian of Fastov and Bishop Gedeon of Makarov.

The people welcomed Archbishop Varsonofy with church hymns and exclamations 'Christ Is Risen!' A representative of the city clergy presented His Eminence with a cross, with which the hierarch blessed the faithful.

A thanksgiving was celebrated, after which Archbishop Damian read out the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Synod's resolution of December 12, 2018 (Minutes No. 72) on the appointment of Archbishop Varsonofy as ruling bishop of the diocese of Vinnitsa. The choir and people sang 'Many Years' to His Eminence.

His Eminence Varsonofy addressed his flock, thanking them for the warm welcome, common prayer and support. He also stressed that he was not going to interfere with the Vinnitsa Cathedral of the Holy Transfiguration, which has been occupied by Metropolitan Simeon (Shostatsky) who has diverted into the schism, but he will, he said, seek to solve legally the problem of returning the church of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

'We are people of Christ, and we do not say in words that we love one another but we should testify to it by our whole life. Evil can be overcome only by love. And I call upon you all, dear fathers, brothers and sisters, to be aware in this hard time that it is only with the help of God that we will be able to rectify the situation so unpleasant for us', the archbishop said, adding, 'We will not capture anything by force, nor press him (Metropolitan Simeon) but we will ask and pray for him. Because the most important thing for us is to preserve the true faith. Truth and faith – how important they are for our salvation! Not the cathedral nor the wall is what we need but faith, prayer and love for each other'.

The hierarch asked for people's prayer and support 'so that I could perform my ministry zealously, in purity and immaculacy', and thanked the city clergy for their courage in defending the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

After the archbishop's homily, the clergy of the Vinnitsa diocese were invited to a general assembly, reports *Patriarchia.ru* with reference to the *Pravoslavnyaya zhizn* portal and the official site of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

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