The Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church gives its assessment to the situation developed after the so-called uniting council in Kiev

On December 17, 2018, the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church met for an extraordinary session. It was chaired by His Beatitude Onufriy, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine.

The Synod considered the challenges facing the Ukrainian Orthodox Church now. In particular, a judgement was made on the gathering which took place on December 15 in the territory of the St. Sophia of Kiev National Preserve presented by its organisers as a ‘uniting council’.

The Synod issued an Appeal to the Archpastors, Pastors, Monastics and Faithful, noting in particular that the new structure announced by the ‘council’ emerged as a result of the unification of the two uncanonical structures – ‘The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church’ and ‘the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kiev Patriarchate’. ‘Thus, this gathering’, the Appeal states, ‘represents a union of schismatics and has nothing to do with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. For our Church, nothing has

changed as the schismatics have remained in schism while the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has remained the true Church of Christ in Ukraine. Nobody in the world questions the validity of the episcopal and priestly ordinations of the clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the gracefulness of the Sacraments celebrated in our Church – the fact that cannot be said of the newly created structure'.

The Synod stated that the participation of two hierarchs of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Simeon of Vinnitsa and Bar and Metropolitan Alexander of Peteryaslav-Khmelnitsky and Vishnev, in this gathering was a deviation into schism and grave violation of both the hierarchal oath and the Ukrainian Orthodox Holy Synod decision of December 7, 2018.

The Synod resolved that Metropolitan Simeon be removed from the administration over the Diocese of Vinnitsa and suspended from the ministry. Metropolitan Alexander of Pereyaslav-Khmelnitsky and Vishnev was also removed as vicar bishop of the Metropolis of Kiev and suspended. It was underscored that the Eucharistic communion with them was henceforth discontinued.

The Synod made appropriate decisions with regard to the priests and deacons who attended the 'council' on December 15.

Archbishop Varsonofy of Borodyanka was assigned to the see of Vinnitsa. A new vicar bishop was elected for the Metropolis of Kiev: Archimandrite Dionysiy (Pilipchuk), a cleric of the diocese of Kiev, will become bishop of Pereyaslav-Khmelnitsky and Vishnev.

In addition, the Synod resolved that Archimandrite Andrey (Vasilashko), a novice of the Kiev-Pechersky Laura, be Bishop of Petropavlovka, vicar of the diocese of Dnepropetrovsk.

In its Appeal to the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the Synod thanked the episcopate, clergy, monastics and laity for their steadfastness and called upon them to pray for those who diverted into the schism, asking the Lord to bring them to reason and give them strength to return to the bosom of the Orthodox Church.

DECR Communication Service

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