



Resolution of the Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of 13 November 2018

On 13 November 2018, the Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church convened in the Holy Dormition Kiev-Caves Lavra and, having heard an address of His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine on the challenges that have recently arisen before the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, adopted the following resolution:

1. Serving God and the people of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is canonical and recognized by the Local Orthodox Churches, takes a principled stand of supporting the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church is present in all regions of Ukraine and unites the territories both under and beyond the control of the Ukrainian authorities, sharing with its people all the joys and sufferings.
2. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church is vested with all rights of independence and self-governance that are needed today for fruitfully serving God and the people of Ukraine.
3. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church has always and consistently spoken out in favour of healing the schism and restoring the ecclesiastical unity, that is, one Church. However, the restoration of the unity of the Ukrainian Orthodoxy must not mean the transformation of the Church into an element of politics or propaganda, for it is contrary to the nature of the Church. We are convinced that the ecclesiastical division must be overcome without the interference of the governmental, political or other external forces.
4. The Council of Bishops speaks out against any attempts, which have already been voiced by top public officials, to change the name of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, as well as against other manifestations of discrimination against the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church at the legislative level. In the event that the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine will adopt such bills, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church will defend its rights by all legal means provided by the Basics of the Social Concept of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the legislation of Ukraine and the European Convention on Human Rights.
5. The Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church regards the decisions of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople of 11 October 2018 concerning the Ukrainian ecclesiastical issue as void and not having any canonical power. In particular, the decision on the establishment of the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the territory of Ukraine is the result of speculative interpretation of church history. And the decision to lift the anathema and other ecclesiastical bans imposed on the leaders of the schism and the recognition of validity of the pseudo-ordinations performed by them while in schism are the result of distorted interpretation of the Orthodox canons. The history of the Ukrainian Church does not know any examples of overcoming a schism by mere legalization. Having adopted such anti-canonical decisions and having recognized the schismatics in their current rank, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, according to the ecclesiastical rules, embarked on the path of schism. Therefore, the Eucharistic communion between the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the Patriarchate of Constantinople is currently impossible and is broken off.
6. We consider inadmissible the unlawful interference of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the

internal affairs of another Local Church and the attempts to resolve the Ukrainian ecclesiastical issue with the involvement of state authorities and schismatics, while ignoring the voice of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Moreover, we state with regret that hundreds of thousands of appeals sent by the faithful of our Church to Patriarch Bartholomew, calling upon him not to legalize the schism under the pretext of creating the autocephaly, have fallen on deaf ears.

7. The Council of Bishops notes that the process of granting the so-called Tomos of Autocephaly is artificial and enforced, that it is not caused by the inner church necessity and will not bring about the real ecclesiastical unity, but will deepen the division and worsen the conflicts among the Ukrainian people. In such circumstances we believe that the participation of the bishops, clergy and laity of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in these processes is impossible.
8. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church takes a principled stand in adhering to the canonical approach to the overcoming of ecclesiastical division. This approach is based on the necessity of repentance for those returning from the schism. The Church has never closed its doors to those who want to achieve spiritual perfection as Orthodox Christians.
9. The Council of Bishops states that the unlawful actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople lead to a deep ecclesiastical crisis both in Ukraine and in the universal Orthodoxy. We pray that the voice of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's millions-strong flock may be heard and that the actions committed so far by the Patriarchate of Constantinople may be rectified.
10. The Council of Bishops calls upon the Patriarchate of Constantinople to engage in dialogue with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with the fraternal participation of all the Local Orthodox Churches for the purpose of seeking the conciliar solution to this problem.
11. The Council of Bishops asks the Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine, to appeal to the Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches with regard to the crisis situation that has arisen in the ecclesiastical life of Ukraine as the result of the unlawful interference of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.
12. The Council of Bishops calls upon all the children of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to pray ever more zealously, to preserve the unity among them, to remain faithful to the Holy Church of Christ and to feel no fear in the face of possible ordeals, bearing in mind the words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33).

13 November 2018

Kiev

Photo from the website of the Information and Education Department of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church

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