



## **Metropolitan Hilarion: the Patriarchate of Constantinople has lost the right to be called the coordinating center for the Orthodox Church**

'The way to returning from a schism is always open and this way lies through repentance' said Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relation, speaking in the Big Game analytical TV program about ways of coming out of the situation caused by the anti-canonical actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople because of which the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, on October 15, 2018, had to recognize as impossible to remain any further in the Eucharistic communion with it.

As is known, by its decisions of October 11 the Patriarchate of Constantinople 'revoked' the decision made over 300 years ago to transfer the Metropolis of Kiev to the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, thus encroaching upon the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church and stated its readiness to implement the project for 'Ukrainian autocephaly'. In addition, the Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in defiance of canonical order admitted into communion the leaders of the Ukrainian schism.

'The Patriarchate of Constantinople has joined the purely political project, which has existed already for over a quarter of a century, to create the so-called autocephalous Ukrainian church', the DECR chairman reminded the audience, 'the project was initiated and supported by political leaders but it is not supported by the basic mass of the church people in Ukraine. It is evident from the thousands-strong processions with the cross held in Kiev; it is evident from the overcrowded churches of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. And we regret that the Patriarchate of Constantinople, for its selfish reasons, has embarked on the path of support for the schism – this anti-church political project'.

It is not the first case of this kind in history, Metropolitan Hilarion stated with regret, 'we remember how Constantinople used to support the Renovators' schism and delivered blows on the Russian Orthodox Church every time when she found herself in a hard situation', the archpastor noted, 'Here is the price of fraternal love so often assured by the Patriarchate of Constantinople'.

'We have now come to face a new church reality: we no longer have a single coordinating center in the Orthodox Church, and we should very clearly realize that the Patriarchate of Constantinople has self-destructed as such', Metropolitan Hilarion stressed. He reminded the audience that for several decades the Moscow Patriarchate and other Local Churches participated in preparing a pan-Orthodox Council;

their representatives and Primate would get together for meetings, which were organized by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. 'But having invaded the canonical boundaries of another Local Church, by legitimizing a schism it has lost the right to be called the coordinating center for the Orthodox Church', the hierarch said.

Is there a possibility that the Patriarchate of Constantinople will disavow the steps it has made? 'A possibility for repentance is always there, though the logic of the recent actions do not presuppose any steps in the opposite direction', His Eminence assumed, 'but we still very much hope that reason will prevail. Patriarch Bartholomew has been often called 'the spiritual leader of the 300 million-strong Orthodox population of the planet', but from these 300 million at least a half should be subtracted; for he is not the spiritual leader for either the Russian Orthodox Church or the Local Orthodox Churches, which I think will not support his predatory actions. Precisely for this reason I say that he has now lost the right to be called the coordinating center for the Orthodox Church'.

The Moscow Patriarchate will continue communion with other Local Orthodox Churches, the DECR chairman said, 'we will continue visiting each other, coordinating our efforts, our views, but the Patriarchate of Constantinople has now fallen out of this process and we should very clearly realize it'.

*DECR Communication Service*

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