



Metropolitan Hilarion: Decisions taken by Constantinople run contrary to canonical Tradition of the Orthodox Church

On October 15 in the interview to the “Big Game” program on the channel 1, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations, spoke about the decisions of the Holy Synod on the uncanonical actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople which has entered into communion with schismatics in Ukraine and encroached upon the canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Statement of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church published on the results of the session held in Minsk says: “To admit into communion schismatics and a person anathematized in other Local Church with all the ‘bishops’ and ‘clergy’ consecrated by him, the encroachment on somebody else’s canonical regions, the attempt to abandon its own historical decisions and commitments – all this leads the Patriarchate of Constantinople beyond the canonical space and, to our great grief, makes it impossible for us to continue the Eucharistic community with its hierarch, clergy and laity.”

Metropolitan Hilarion explained that in compliance with the decision the clergymen of the Russian Orthodox Church will not concelebrate divine services with the clerics of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and the laypersons will not be able to take Holy communion in churches under its jurisdiction. The archpastor said: “This will certainly raise the question of pastoral care for many Russian believers living in places with no churches of the Russian Orthodox Church, but with churches of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, to which they will not be able to go.”

As to the response of the other Orthodox Churches to the decision taken today, the DECR chairman noted: “I do not want to make any forecast, but I can say that as yet no one Local Church has supported actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. These actions can be characterized only as robber’s actions.”

Metropolitan Hilarion added that history knows Ecumenical Councils, Local Councils, but also councils which were called robber councils. ‘It was exactly the robber’s gathering held several days ago in Constantinople. Its decisions run contrary to the canonical Tradition of the Orthodox Church,’ Metropolitan Hilarion underscored having in mind the results of the session of the Patriarchate of Constantinople Synod made public on 11 October 2018: “Today our Synod responded to them, in particular to the decision to revoke the Synodal Act of 1686, according to which the Kievan Metropolia

had become a part of the Moscow Patriarchate. First, this Act cannot be revoked, and, secondly, the church canons do not stipulate changes of canonical boundaries if at least thirty years passed since their establishment, while in this case over three hundred years have passed.”

Metropolitan Hilarion also said that the Statement of the Holy Synod of October 15 says that canonical boundaries of the present Ukrainian Orthodox Church do not coincide with the boundaries of the Kievan Metropolia of 1686, which was several times smaller.

Besides, he added, the lifting of anathema from Filaret (Denisenko), leader of the Ukrainian schism, is unlawful, because this anathema was not imposed by Constantinople, and can be lifted only by the Russian Orthodox Church. “The Patriarchate of Constantinople has no right to accept appeals from other Local Churches though it is preaching it in the newly invented teaching. We have clearly declared this in our Statement having cited opinions of the authoritative Byzantine canonists.”

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