Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church holds its regular session



On 21 December 2017, a regular session of the Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church took place at the Kievan Lavra of the Caves under the chairmanship of His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine.

In view of the decisions taken during the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church that was held in Moscow on 29 November – 2 December 2017, the Synod, on behalf of the clergy, monks, nuns and laypeople of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church expressed gratitude to the Council for "the special attention to the life of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church" and emphasized the importance of the decisions that had been taken. The members of the Synod expressed their readiness to "conduct negotiations with those who are not in unity with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, to overcome the schism in the Ukrainian Orthodoxy and to restore the ecclesiastical communion."

Considering the efforts made by the Church to release the military men taken captive during the armed

conflict in Donbass, the participants in the meeting thanked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill for his “attention to the requests” of the families of the Ukrainian prisoners of war, as well as for “the effective efforts aimed at freeing them from captivity.” The Synod called upon the hierarchs, clergy and laypeople of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to “pray even more fervently for the soonest release of all prisoners of war and for their return to homes.”

In view of the meeting held between His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and Metropolitan Antony of Borispol and Brovary, the members of the Synod expressed their gratitude to the Primate of the Church of Constantinople for “the constructive talks and support for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.” As the participants in the session noted, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is ready to overcome the Ukrainian schism “on canonical grounds.” The Synod expressed satisfaction with the “common and concerted position of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and all the Local Orthodox Churches concerning the solution of the problem of church schisms.”

Archbishop Kliment of Irpen, vicar of the Kievan metropolia, was appointed administrator of the Nezhin diocese with the title “Archbishop of Nezhin and Priluki.”

Having heard a report from Archbishop Panteleimon of Rovenki and Sverdlovsk, head of the Synodal Department for Family of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the members of the Synod approved the Concept and Regulations for Mentoring Children Living in Orphanages and in Other Institutions of Twenty-Four-Hour Residence.

At his request, Metropolitan Antony of Borispol and Brovary was released from his duties as rector of the Kiev Theological Academy and Seminary. The members of the Synod thanked the hierarch for all the years of his fruitful work. Archimandrite Silvestr (Stoychev), vice-rector of the Kiev Theological Academy, was appointed new rector and elected Bishop of Belgorod, vicar of the Kievan metropolia.

The participants in the session heard annual reports from the synodal institutions of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and expressed approval of their work.

The members of the Synod also took a number of decisions pertaining to the life of dioceses and monasteries, and to the disciplinary matters, established new days of celebrations in honour of the icons of the Mother of God, and blessed the glorification of the Venerable Pelagia Gorlenko as a locally venerated saint of the Nezhin diocese.

Invited to take part in the next sessions of the Holy Synod were Metropolitan Efrem of Krivoy Rog and Nikopol, Archbishop Filaret of Lvov and Galich, and Archbishop Filaret of Novaya Kakhovka and Genichesk.

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Photo from the website of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/47828/