Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk comments on spreading reports on the appeal of the former Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine

On November 1, 2017, the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church heard a written appeal of the former Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev and All Ukraine to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and the episcopate of the Russian Orthodox Church, dated November 16, and adopted a Resolution on this appeal.

Commenting on incorrect mass media report, which have appeared soon after the publication of the Resolution, the chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR) Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk stated, 'Regrettably, in its report Interfax news agency illiterately communicated the essence of the letter sent by the former Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev and All Ukraine to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and the episcopate of the Russian Orthodox Church'.

"The notion of 'pardon" is absent from the canonical lexicon of the Orthodox Church and was not used in the letter', Metropolitan Hilarion explained, 'It contained a request for the revocation of 'all the decisions including bans and excommunications… for the sake of achieving God-commanded peace between Orthodox Christians of the same faith and reconciliation between nations'.

The letter concludes with the following words: 'I ask for your forgiveness in everything in which I sinned by word, deed and all my feelings, and in the same way I sincerely forgive everybody from my heart'.

'These words were seen by the Bishops' Council members as a testimony to the readiness to begin negotiations on overcoming the deplorable division which has lasted for a quarter of a century. It is for the holding of negotiations, not at all for some 'pardon' that the Council has formed a commission', the DECR chairman pointed out (in the above-mentioned Resolution of the Bishops' Council, it is stated that the commission has been established for conducting further negotiations with the those who separated themselves from church communion).

'I believe it important that those who will be involved in the negotiations in future should not react to the distorted presentation of church decisions in the mass media. The official position of the Church is reflected in the resolutions adopted by the church authority and published by the Church in her own information resources', Metropolitan Hilarion concluded.

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