



## **Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church completes its second day work**

November 30, 2017 – The Sacred Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church continued its work at the Church Councils Hall of the Cathedral Church of Christ the Saviour.

During the second day, a report was made by His Beatitude Onufry, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine, who spoke on the life of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in today's situation.

The report of Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna, head of the Patriarchal Church-Public Council for perpetuating the memory new martyrs and confessors of the Russian Church, was devoted to the events dated for the centenary of the beginning of persecution against the Russian Orthodox Church and perpetuation of the memory of new martyrs.

The chairman of the Patriarchal Council for Culture and secretary of the church commission for the study of the results achieved in the examination of the relics found near Yekaterinburg, Bishop Tikhon of Yegorievsk made a report on the progress made by the work to identify 'the Yekaterinburg remnants'.

The reports were followed by a discussion.

On the same day, the council members discussed and adopted a Provision for Monasteries and Monastics of the Russian Orthodox Church. The draft document was presented by Metropolitan George of Nizhniy Novgorod and Arzamas, chairman of the Inter-Council Presence's commission for monasteries and monastics.

The meeting also heard a report by the chairman of the synodal canonization commission, Bishop Pancraty of Troitsk, which was followed by the Bishops' Council's adoption of a decision on church-wide glorification of a number of locally venerated saints.

The chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Varsonofiy of St. Petersburg and Ladoga introduced the assembly to the proposed amendments to the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church and several other church documents. The Bishops' Council considered the proposal made by His Beatitude Onufry, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine, to single out in a separate chapter the provisions of the Russian Orthodox Church statute that concern the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. After a discussion, the council members adopted a Resolution 'On the introduction of amendments and additions to the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church and other documents of the Russian Orthodox

Church', according to which the Statute Par. 18 Chapter XI now have a new chapter entitled 'The Ukrainian Orthodox Church'.

By this Resolution, some changes were made concerning such matters as the procedure for the glorification of locally venerated saints, a clarification of the powers of Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal throne as concerns the awarding work, a correction of the judicial system of the Russian Orthodox Church, the formation of representations of the Moscow Patriarchate structures abroad by the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Among the second day agenda items were the elections to the Church Court due to the expiration of the four-year mandate of the three of its members, Metropolitan Isidore of Yekaterinodar and Kuban (chairman), Metropolitan Yevlogiy of Vladimir and Suzdal and Metropolitan Alexander of Bryansk and Sevsk (secretary). Having heard a report of Patriarch Kirill, the council members resolved to elect Metropolitan Isidore for the second term as chairman of the Church Court, Metropolitan Alexander of Bryansk and Sevsk and Bishop Dionysiy of Kasimov and Sasovo as secretary of the court.

During the second day, the council hierarchs heard a written appeal of the former Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev and All Ukraine to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, dated November 16, 2007. The letter contains a request to restore the Eucharistic and devotional communion with Christians in the Ukrainian church schism and to annul 'all the decisions including bans and excommunications... for the sake of God-commanded peace between Orthodox Christians of the same faith and reconciliation between nations'. The letter concluded with the following words: 'I ask for forgiveness for everything in which I have sinned by word, deed and all my feelings and in the same way I sincerely forgive all from my heart'.

In the Resolution adopted as a results of the discussion it is stated that the Council sees the appeal with satisfaction as a step toward overcoming and restoring the church communion made by those who once fell away from the unity with the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. "Today's duty both of those who are in the Church and those who seek to reunite with her lies in the hourly feat of mutual love and self-renunciation so that the long standing alienation may be overcome, putting our trust in the mercy and charity of Jesus Christ our Lord and God Who has destroyed the dividing wall of enmity. The resolute rejection of violence and capture of churches, the rejection of mutual accusations and reproaches, mutual forgiveness of each other's old grievances – these are the healing means of self-sacrifice and love of Christ which alone can help restore the unity of the canonical Church in Ukraine', the document states.

The Council established a commission for conducting further negotiations with those who have fallen away from church communion.

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