His Holiness Patriarch Kirill: Church schism in Ukraine can only be overcome by canonical means

“Difficult political processes have been going on in Ukraine for over twenty years and have resulted in a tragic division of our Church. During those years, there were attempts to use political power to solve the ecclesiastical problem in Ukraine. Today I would like to address all Ukrainian people and say: authorities must not interfere in church matters. It is impossible to solve ecclesiastical problems or achieve the unity of the Church by force,” His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia said in his primatial word after the Liturgy celebrated at the Moscow Church of Archangel Michael in Troparevo on February 23, 2014.

“History has not known examples of solving ecclesiastical problems by force. The Church should not rely on any external factors, but handle all acute questions by herself,” His Holiness said.

“I have called to unity my brothers and sisters in Ukraine, living in schism, and I do it today. I do not call to the unity which will be a result of a changed political conjuncture or which will be based on force. The unity I call to will arise from the sincere desire to return to canonical principles, without which the Church cannot live,” Patriarch Kirill continued.

“The way to overcome the schism is the return to canonical principles of church life. Such unity will be lasting and salutary,” the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church said.

“I believe that by the prayers of the saints who shone forth in the Kiev Laura of the Caves and of all our saints, the Lord will save the Church in Ukraine and will grant strength to the Ukrainian people to overcome many spiritual and material difficulties, and first of all, to overcome the division of the Church by legal and righteous means… We believe that the spiritual strength, which sprang from the Kiev baptismal font and helped us maintain spiritual unity for a thousand years, today will also help us, who rely on the Orthodox faith and the Word of God, to overcome difficulties and divisions,” His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said in conclusion.

Press Service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

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