Appeal of the Supreme Church Council of the Russian Orthodox Church

The Appeal was adopted as a result of the meeting of the Russian Orthodox Church's Supreme Church Council held at the Church of Christ the Saviour on 3 April 2012.

The Russian Orthodox Church, while fulfilling her mission of preaching the Gospel, demonstrates an active position on many burning issues and actively participates in the solution of many topical social problems. The help to the thousands of people during fires of 2010, fund raising and collections of material goods for disadvantaged categories of citizens, various kinds of work with children and the youth, and the coming of many thousands of people to venerate the Cincture of the Most Holy Mother of God, have shown the ability of the Church to unite millions of people in prayer, good deeds, and concern for people's future. Regrettably, not all people rejoice and accept all this.

The antichurch forces fear the strengthening of Orthodoxy in the country; they are frightened of the revival of national self-conscience and mass popular initiative. These people are not many, but some of them have influence and are willing to use their financial, informational and administrative resources for discrediting hierarchs and clerics, for engendering discord and alienating people from the church.

Joining these forces are those who promote false values of aggressive liberalism, since the Church has an unyielding position of non-acceptance of such anti-Christian phenomena as the recognition of the same-sex marriages, freedom of expression of all desires, unrestrained consumption, and the propagation of permissiveness and fornication. Moreover, the attacks on the Church are profitable to those whose commercial interests are infringed by the programme of building new churches in the densely populated districts of Moscow and of other large cities.

The confrontation between the Church and the anti-Christian forces becomes even more obvious and acute. The attacks were particularly noticeable in the pre-election and post-election periods, showing their political hidden motive, including an anti-Russian one. Various means are employed, and a planned campaign of systematic defamation is launched. Clergymen are involved in provocations; archpastors and priests are in the focus of close attention of the discontented who are seeking the slightest pretext to distort everything and to supply dirty arguments for information.

Recently, a series of acts of vandalism and the desecration of churches have taken place, beginning with the blasphemy in the Cathedral Church of Christ the Saviour on February 21, when a group of

persons committed a sacrilegious act on the ambo near the holy sanctuary, particles of the Robe of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Robe of the Most Holy Mother of God, and relics of the great saints. A man attacked thirty icons of great spiritual, historical and artistic value in the Cathedral of St. Procopius in Velikiy Ustug on March 6, and on March 18, the Church of St. Sergius of Radonezh in the city of Mozyr was defiled by blasphemous inscriptions and an outrage upon the Precious and Life-Giving Cross. On March 20, a man rushed into the Cathedral Church of the Intercession in Nevinnomyssk with a hunting knife. He smashed up icons, drove a knife into the veneration cross, beat up the priest, broke up the Royal Doors and desecrated the Lord's sanctuary. It is in this context that a slanderous informational attack is being made on the Primate of the Church. All these incidents are components of the campaign against Orthodoxy and the Russian Orthodox Church.

New loud accusations and statements by the foes of faith are not excluded in the future. The danger of the tactics used against the Church lies in that, in compliance with the rules of manipulation of public opinion, there are to be found nearby genuine facts; that what is not profitable is hushed up; cynical statements are made that evoke anger, fear, hatred, indignation, and spite. All devices of black rhetoric are set going, such as ignoring a part of facts, changing the meaning of what is going on, the direct leading people into error, and deception.

Under the circumstances, we must keep unity of mind and not yield to provocations and falsehood. We must learn to accept questionable information about the Church critically, not to be quick to reply in both public and private statements. At the same time, the position of the Church's enemies must be taken into account in the everyday activities of the Church.

Nothing new happens today. We remember how in the early 20th century the theomachists rose against the faith of Christ, the Holy Church, our churches and holy objects with the same slogans. There were traitors-renovationists who were willing to profane the name of God, holy icons and churches, and to condemn the First Hierarch, archpastors, pastors, the monastics and laymen to bonds and death. But even then our people said their word. In 1918, the believers defended the Laura of St. Alexander Nevsky, under attack from atheists, from closure and desecration. Clergymen and laymen rose in defence of other churches as well. Many believers witnessed their faithfulness to Christ and His Church by death at the hands of the theomachists.

Today, likewise, we must defend what God has given us and what our hearts cherish. Let the believers not be embarrassed by the words of those who are calling them to consent with sin and lawlessness and to forgive those who do not ask for forgiveness, saying that they do not need it. Let us remember that the lack of repentance can confirm the sinner in the awareness of his being right and prompt him to repeat his sinful acts.

We invite all hierarchs, pastors and laymen to manifest again the triumph of Christ's truth to the world on April 22, the day of Doubting Thomas, by celebrating a moleben and vigil in defence of the faith, the desecrated holy objects, the Church and her good name. We invite to celebrate a moleben and vigil at each cathedral church of the dioceses of the Russian Church. The moleben and vigil will be celebrated in Moscow before the Church of Christ the Saviour, the icons and the cross that suffered from the ill-doers and madmen.

On Lenten days we call upon all who hear us to repent and change their life. It is repentance that opens the doors of forgiveness. The Lord and the Church are willing to gladly accept all repentant sinners. We remind those who give way to despair and mourn over the mentioned events of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ: "In the world ye shall have tribulation. But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world!" (Jn 16:33)

We are convinced that our Church will come out from the present trials stronger, as she did in the 20th century. Neither new hard times, nor "the wickedness of the foe" will divide and weaken us, as we shall overcome them with prayer and hope in almighty God's help, knowing that any evil and wickedness have been conquered by the power of the Cross and Resurrection of Christ.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/54363/