Russian Orthodox Church Inter-Council Presence's commission for opposing and overcoming church schisms meets in Kiev

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The ROC Inter-Council Presence's commission for opposing and overcoming church schisms met for a regular session on September 19, 2011, at the Kiev Laura of the Caves.

The chairman of the commission, His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine, sent the participants a message of greetings, assuring them of his prayers for the success of their work and noting that the main factor of their work lies in 'the profound awareness of the abnormality of the situation when the faithful find themselves outside the saving fold of the Orthodox Church'. One of the causes of this situation is the cooling of love and the penetration of the church fold by 'the spirit of this age – the spirit of division and pride'. For this reason, to make their work a success the commission members 'should be filled with the spirit of unity, peace, patience and all-forgiving love of Christ'. Only this way the commission will be able 'to offer the conciliar mind of the Russian Orthodox Church canonically right and evangelical in spirit ways of overcoming internal church divisions and schisms'.

Reminding the commission that 'to pray for the preservation of church unity and to heal divisions is a duty of every bishop, priest and lay Orthodox Christian', His Beatitude wished the commission 'successful work and worthy fruits of joint efforts for which it members will not be ashamed before the Head of our Church – our Lord Jesus Christ and before His Holiness the Patriarch, the Inter-Council Presence's Presidium and Councils of the Russian Orthodox Church'.

Due to an operation Metropolitan Vladimir had undergone, the commission was chaired by his deputy, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations.

The meeting was also attended by Archbishop Mitrofan of Belaya Tserkov and Boguslavsk, chancellor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church; Archbishop Alexander of Pereyaslavl-Khmelnitsky, head of the UOC department for external church relations; Bishop Markell of Beltsy and Falesht, Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman and secretary of the commission; Archpriest Andrey Novikov, secretary of the Odessa diocesan administration; Hegumen Serapion (Mit'ko), Rev. Ioann Miroliubov, Rev. Maxim Plyakin, and Mr. A. Maler.

The commission considered the improved draft document ‘On the coordination of work to consolidate church unity and to prevent church schisms’ and approved it with amendments and additions. The commission members also considered the progress made in drafting a document ‘On measures for overcoming consequences of the 17th century church division’ and agreed to continue working at it.

The commission also discussed a further work plan.

The participants in the meeting lifted up a prayer for a speedy recovery of His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine.

DECR Communication Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/55196/