



## **Ukrainian Orthodox Church Holy Synod meeting in Kiev**

The Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church met on 26 February 2010 at the Dormition Laura of the Caves in Kiev. The session was chaired by His Holiness Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine.

Metropolitan Vladimir made a report on the pastoral visit made to Ukraine by the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

On February 24, His Holiness Kirill and his delegation were welcomed at Borispol airport by the Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, member of the UOC Holy Synod, clergy and students of the Kiev theological schools and Ukrainian state officials. In the evening, His Holiness Kirill visited the Dormition Laura of the Caves. He was welcomed by the Laura's father superior, Archbishop Pavel of Vyshgorod, bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the Laura's monastic community. At the Church of the Elevation of the Cross, Patriarch Kirill venerated the miracle-working Icon of the Dormition and pronounced his patriarchal benediction over the monastery's brethren.

On February 25, His Holiness Kirill and His Beatitude Vladimir said a thanksgiving at the Laura's refectory church, lifting up prayers to God for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. Among the worshippers was Ukrainian President-elect Victor Yanukovich. After the thanksgiving, His Holiness Kirill addressed himself to Mr. Yanukovich with congratulations on this election as head of the Ukrainian State. Then the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts was celebrated.

The Holy Synod members praised the All-Merciful Lord for His mercy towards the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the God-loving Ukrainian people as revealed in the opportunity for them to pray together with the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church and expressed sincere gratitude to His Holiness for his archpastoral visit to Ukraine and spiritual support for the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

A report was made about the participation of UOC representatives in the events devoted to the inauguration of the newly elected President Victor Yanukovich. The Synod called upon the episcopate, clergy and all the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to lift up prayers to God for the head of the Ukrainian state, authorities and army.

The UOC Holy Synod also adopted a Message to Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich.

The Synod also considered the bringing of the miracle-working Icon of Our Lady of Bethlehem to

Ukraine for the period from April 3 to 18, 2010. Having thanked His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos of the Holy City of Jerusalem and All Palestine and the Church of Jerusalem Holy Synod for their permission to bring this icon over to Ukraine, the Synod asked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia for his blessing upon the bringing of the Icon of Our Lady of Bethlehem to the Ukrainian land.

The year 2010 will mark the 75<sup>th</sup> birthday of His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine. The Synod resolved that an organizing commission for the event be established. The Synod agreed on its membership and appointed Archbishop Mitrofan of Belaya Tserkov and Boguslavsk as its chairman.

The Synod instituted a new decoration of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – the Order of St. Peter Moghila.

After considering the reports of Metropolitan Agafangel of Odessa and Izmail and Metropolitan Iriney of Dnepropetrovsk and Pavlograd, the Synod decided to ask His Holiness Patriarch Kirill to come for a visit to the dioceses of Odessa and Dnepropetrovsk and the city of Kiev in July 2010.

The Synod considered the situation around the Pochaev Laura of the Dormition. On February 11, 2010, the Ternopol Council demanded that the Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko recall the Cabinet of Ministers' decree No. 438-p of July 17, 2003, 'On Excluding the Buildings of the Pochaev Laura of the Dormition from the Pochaev State Historical and Architectural Preserve'. On February 23, the Laura's father superior, Archbishop Vladimir of Pochaev, sent a letter to the Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, expressing concern over the situation.

The Synod expressed concern over the demand of the Ternopol Council to return the Pochaev Laura of the Dormition to the state preserve as its part and decided to send appropriate letters to Ukrainian President Yanukovich and Prime Minister Tymoshenko.

The Synod also made some decisions concerning the publishing and informational work of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The membership of the Theological and Canonical Commission was adopted, with Archbishop Antony of Borispol appointed as its chairman.

Having heard the report of Bishop Panteleimon of Vasilkov in his capacity of chairman of the Synodal Department for Family, the Synod adopted a Provision for the Work of the Department and agreed on its membership.

The UOC Holy Synod also made a number of decisions on theological education and the life of monasteries. Two monasteries were opened, one dedicated to the Nativity of the Mother of God at the Tserkovschina Hole in Kiev and another to St. Michael of the Ugornitsa Monastery at the village of Babyanka near Ivano-Frankovsk.

*DECR Communication Service*

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