



## **Message of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Holy Synod to Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich**

Highly Esteemed Mr. President,

We sincerely congratulate you on your election and inauguration as President of Ukraine. *May grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, be with you in truth and love (2 Jn. 1:3).*

The Lord has fulfilled His holy will through the declaration of the will of the Ukrainian people. By the Lord's right hand you have been installed to serve the millions-strong and multinational people of Ukraine.

We know you as a believer and therefore hope that you will be a worthy successor to the cause that was pursued by the Holy Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles - the Baptizer of Rus', the Holy Prince Yaroslav the Wise – an enlightener and the builder of St. Sophia, and Hetmans Peter Sagaidachny and Bogdan Khmelnytsky – defenders of Holy Orthodoxy and our people's unity.

It is our profound conviction that the Ukrainian President and all the authorities should be models of selfless service of the people and state.

We hope for a fruitful development of state-church relations in defending public morality and bringing up youth on the basis of God's Law. In doing so, we believe it necessary to introduce the study of basic Christian ethics, Orthodox culture and God's Law in educational establishments on all levels beginning from a kindergarten to the most prestigious university.

The groups of the population who need social protection and spiritual support should become a common concern for the State and the Church. Children deprived of parental love and elderly people left without support should be provided for not only financially but should also feel the warmth of prayer and good hearts of Christian volunteers and sisters of mercy.

People in penitentiaries should not be left without pastoral care which can become a first step towards reformation and return to normal life.

The Ukrainian Army needs army priests so that servicemen could be educated in the spirit of true patriotism and love of God and their homeland on earth.

The Church hopes that the State will support by all possible means the development of religious education and information projects on television, radio and other mass media with the aim to promote religious regeneration and education of the next generations.

The Church and the State should continue working together to preserve the cultural and religious heritage of our people and their historic monuments. The Church does not deny the need for museums and preserves, galleries, museum storerooms and book depositories, but she is convinced that church valuables and sights, which were taken away from believers by the theomachistic power, should be returned to their real owners.

For the Church to provide for herself, to revive her social service in its fullness and to help people, we hope that the process of returning church property will continue, thus helping to revive the economic work of the Church.

Dear Mr. President, ahead of you is a great mission of consolidation of Ukrainian society and our people's unity on the basis of our traditions and Christian virtues, mutual forgiveness and aid and selfless service of neighbours. On her part, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church will exert every effort to heal the wounds of schism on the body of Ukrainian Orthodoxy in the spirit of the church canonical order.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church prays that the Lord may give you wisdom and strength and reliable and faithful helpers.

We invoke God's blessing upon you and pray for our God-saved country, its authorities and army. May your presidency see the fulfillment of the liturgical words in which the Church prays to God for you and the leadership of the country: 'Grant them, O Lord, a peaceful governance so that in their tranquility we may be able to lead calm and quiet lives in all piety and dignity!'

*On behalf of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church,*

**+ Vladimir**

**Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine**

**Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church**