



## **Holy Synod takes a number of decisions concerning external relations of the Russian Orthodox Church**

During its session held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020 under the chairmanship of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church took a number of decisions pertaining to the external activities of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Synod members considered the consequences that ensued from the commemoration by the Primate of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus of the schismatic structure acting in Ukraine (Minutes No. 77).

The Holy Synod expressed its deep regret over the anti-canonical commemoration of the head of one of the Ukrainian schismatic groups in the diptychs of the Orthodox Primate by Archbishop Chrysostomos II of Cyprus, which indicated that Archbishop Chrysostomos had entered into communion with schismatics.

As was emphasized during the meeting, Archbishop Chrysostomos took the aforementioned decision alone, without the agreement of the members of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus; therefore, the decision does not have conciliar nature.

It was taken into consideration that the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus, at its session on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019, chaired by Archbishop Chrysostomos, expressed lawful “doubts about a possibility to legitimize *post factum* the ordinations performed by the defrocked, excommunicated and anathematized bishops,” meaning the “episcopate” of the newly created schismatic structure in Ukraine.

It was also noted that Archbishop Chrysostomos’ decision ran counter to his repeated official statements on the Ukrainian issue, in particular, to his letter of 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018, addressed to the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, in which the Archbishop of Cyprus gave the following assurances: “The Church of Cyprus will never deviate from her position, which we have set forth for you on many occasions, that is to say, we will use all our resources to support the position of the Russian Orthodox Church on the issue of the so-called autocephaly in Ukraine. She believes this position to be fair and wholly justified.”

The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church stated the impossibility of commemorating the name of Archbishop Chrysostomos II of Cyprus in the diptychs, as well as of maintaining prayerful and

Eucharistic communion with him and concelebrating with those hierarchs of the Church of Cyprus who would enter into ecclesiastical communion with representatives of the Ukrainian schism.

During the session, the Synod members heard and took under advisement a report by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, on his visit to Syria in the period from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 (Minutes No. 82).

The Holy Synod also approved a number of decisions concerning the staff of the Moscow Patriarchate's dioceses and parishes abroad (Minutes No. 91).

By the decision of the Synod, Archpriest Vladimir Levchenyuk, supernumerary cleric of the Rovno diocese, and Priest Georgy Pinko, supernumerary cleric of the Bryansk diocese, were transferred to serve under the administrator of the diocese of Spain and Portugal, and Archpriest Igor Trofim, supernumerary cleric of the Edineț diocese, was transferred to serve under the administrator of the Chersonesus diocese.

Archpriest Yevgeny Pavelchuk, cleric of the Minsk diocese, was sent to carry out his pastoral service at the Russian Orthodox Church's Metochion in Sofia and appointed secretary to the Representation of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to the Patriarch of Bulgaria.

*DECR Communication Service*

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