THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

Holy Synod states the impossibility of Eucharistic communion with Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus

On 20th November 2020, during its session, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church 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).

On 24th October 2020, during the Liturgy in the Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos Chrysorrogiatissa near the city of Paphos, Archbishop Chrysostomos II of New Justiniana and All Cyprus commemorated the head of one of the schismatic groups in Ukraine in the diptychs of Primates of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches. Later Archbishop Chrysostomos admitted that he had not discussed his decision with the members of the Holy Synod of the Church of Cyprus and they had known nothing about the coming commemoration.

Metropolitans Athanasios of Limassol, Nikephoros of Kykkos, Isaiah of Tamassos and Nicholas of Amathounta issued a joint statement, condemning the Archbishop's act as a "gross violation of the conciliar, collegial and democratic order of our Orthodox Church and of the way in which the Orthodox Church functions on the basis of this system," and calling upon him "to cancel immediately his anti-canonical and invalid action." The statement notes that the granting of "autocephaly" by the Patriarchate of Constantinople to the Ukrainian schismatics "is an arbitrary, uncanonical and anti-church action since the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate."

Metropolitan Neophytos of Morphou said during his archpastoral meeting with the faithful of the Metropolis of Morphou, "Metropolitan Onufry was, is and, I hope, will remain the canonical bishop of the city of Kiev," noting that even if the majority of bishops will support Archbishop Chrysostomos, "it will not make Yepifany a canonical hierarch."

The participants in the session of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church expressed their deep regret over the anti-canonical commemoration of the head of one of the Ukrainian schismatic groups in the diptychs of the Orthodox Primates, which indicates that Archbishop Chrysostomos 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 18th February 2019, chaired by Archbishop Chrysostomos, expressed lawful “doubts about a possibility to legitimatize *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 26th 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.

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