



Zakarpattia: parishioners of the canonical Church have to worship outdoors in winter



Even a cold weather that has recently set in did not prevent the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's community at the Delovoye village (Zakarpatska Oblast, Ukraine), who have been deprived of their church because of the raiding of schismatics. On February 15, 2021, the feast of the Meeting of Our Lord, a great number of parishioners worshiped during the Divine Liturgy next to a tiny chapel that has become now a place for the community's worship.

The service was streamed live by Archimandrite Benedict (Khromey) on his page on Facebook. It was reported in 2019 that the re-registration of the canonical Church's community at the Delovoye village to an 'OCU' schismatic structure with the help of public agents who had swindled out the statute documents from the priest. However, at that moment, the actual capture of the church by schismatics failed as parishioners succeeded in defending the church of the Dormition from raiders. There are few proponents of the 'OCU' in the Zakarpattian village while the community of the canonical Church is large in number. During the raiding attacks several hundreds of the faithful came out to defend their church.

At present, judicial processes are going on in which the Orthodox community contests the actions of the authorities by pointing out that the re-registration of the church building took place on the basis of actually stolen documents.

However, one of the court decisions in favor of raiders from the 'OCU' has come into force. And despite an appeal filed after the 'OCU' representatives resorted to the executive service on February 3, 2021, the church of the Dormition was blocked by OMON (Special Purpose Police Unit) and later representatives of the schismatic structure were allowed to enter the building. The following day, the schismatic 'service' at the captured church was attended only by some 20 people, while the large community of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, deprived of their church, had to assemble for worship in the open despite the February cold.

The community will continue using legal methods to defend their church while considering a possibility for building a new church of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church - the decision to give a plot of land for such construction has been made by one of the women parishioners.

*DECR Communication Service
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Union of Orthodox Journalists and
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