



## **Metropolitan Hilarion: Patriarch Bartholomew does not want to admit his fault in the Ukrainian problem**



Ukrainian authorities have invited Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and Pope Francis to attend the celebrations of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ukraine's independence. Ms. Gracheva, the host of "The Church and the World" TV program, asked Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), to share his opinion on whether the invitations would be accepted.

"While I don't want to be a soothsayer, I think that Patriarch Bartholomew will accept this invitation, but Pope Francis won't," said the archpastor.

"Patriarch Bartholomew is a man who lives in the cloudland of his illusions, ambitions, emotions, who seems to have lost touch with reality, presenting his fantasies as actually occurring things," Metropolitan Hilarion noted. "For example, he turns a blind eye to the existence of the multimillion-strong Ukrainian Orthodox Church with twelve and a half thousand parishes, over 100 bishops, over 250 monasteries and millions of the faithful. His attitude is as if this Church were non-existent; he asserts that there is

some kind of another 'church' which he has knocked up from two schismatic groups." "That is why, – the DECR chairman believes, – Patriarch Bartholomew will come to Ukraine just to demonstrate to the world once again that the 'autocephalous church' which he has created is the Ukrainian Church, whereas reality testifies to the opposite," Metropolitan Hilarion underscored.

"Patriarch Bartholomew has made a great mistake, but unfortunately he will not and cannot admit it," continued Metropolitan Hilarion. "He would make whatever moves to convince the world into believing that he has made no mistake, but all others have been mistaken."

Speaking about Pope Francis, Metropolitan Hilarion characterized him as a man of realistic vision, who realizes that if he comes to Ukraine he will be inevitably drawn into recognizing the schismatics in this or that form. "I don't think he will want to do this," the DECR chairman said.

"Besides, we should not forget that the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church's attitude to Pope Francis personally and to the Roman See on the whole is rather skeptical, and at times even openly negative," continued Metropolitan Hilarion. "For instance, the head of that Church, Archbishop Svyatoslav (Shevchuk) on quite a few occasions spoke of the Havana Declaration of Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill as a document very nearly targeted against Ukrainian Greek-Catholics dealing them a blow. He is very negative about this document and about the direct dialogue of the Pope of Rome with the Russian Orthodox Church."

*DECR Communication Service*

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