Congress on monasticism in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church opens in the Lavra of St. Job of Pochaev



On 15th July 2021 a congress at the Dormition Lavra of St. Job of Pochaev on monasticism in the Ukrainian Orthodox Church opened with the blessing of His Beatitude Onuphrius, metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine, attended by the abbots and vicar abbots, mother superiors and representatives of the monasteries and hermitages of the canonical Ukrainian Church.

The decision to hold a congress of monastics was taken at the session of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church on 12th May 2021.

The gathering was headed by the chairman of the congress the metropolitan of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl Paul, vicar abbot of the Dormition Monastery of the Caves in Kiev and chairman of the Synodal commission for monasteries of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The congress's vice chairman was the metropolitan of Pochaev and vicar abbot of the Dormition Lavra of St. Job of Pochaev Vladimir; the secretary was the metropolitan of Svyatogorsk and vicar abbot of the Dormition Lavra of

Svyatogorsk Arseny. Present at the presidium was the metropolitan of Kamenets-Podolsk Theodore.

Before the beginning of the event the divine liturgy was celebrated in the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral of the Lavra. There was then celebrated a prayer service after which the delegates venerated the monastery's relics.

At the beginning of the congress's work the metropolitan of Kamenets-Podolsk and Gorodok Theodore read out greetings by His Beatitude metropolitan Onuphrius. "May the Merciful Lord through the prayers of His Most Pure Mother, in whose Lavra we have today gathered, bless all the participants of this monastic forum, bring wisdom and inspire them to right conclusions and decisions for the strengthening of each garden of the monastic mission in the land of Ukraine," said the primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The forum is being attended by twenty-two bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and three hundred deputy abbots and abbesses and other representatives of the monasteries and hermitages.

The metropolitan of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl Paul gave a presentation at the session on the role and meaning of monasticism in the salvation of the human soul. The speech by the mother superior of the Convent of the Holy Archangel Michael in Odessa abbess Seraphima (Shevchuk) was dedicated to the topic of monasticism as the bulwark of canonical Orthodoxy. The rector of the theological schools in Kiev the bishop of Belogorod Sylvester spoke of the situation in world Orthodoxy as a result of the actions of Patriarch Bartholomew in Ukraine and the possible contribution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to its resolution.

During the break a group photograph was taken of all the congress participants.

The next plenary session began with the presentation by the metropolitan of Pochaev Vladimir on the topic of monasticism in the modern-day world. The mother superior of the stavropegial Zimneye Convent of the Dormition abbess Stephana (Bandura) invited those present to think upon the topic of gadgets in monasteries and the use of mobile phones, networks and the internet in monastic house and their advantages and dangers.

The vicar abbot of the Uzhgorod Monastery of the Resurrection archimandrite Mark (Kushtan) gave a presentation on the monastic vocation and encouraging the young to take up the monastic life. Archimandrite Symeon (Gagatik), the vicar abbot of the Akhtyr Holy Trinity Monastery, dedicated his presentation to the topic of contemporary monasticism and what is possible and not possible.

After break for lunch, the third part of the congress began during which metropolitan of Svyatogorsk

Anthony spoke of spiritual guidance in the monastic house.

Later, the auxiliary bishop of the diocese of Borispyl the bishop of Zgurov Ambrosius will give a presentation on the topic of the monasteries' educational work. The mother superior of the stavropegial Covent of St. Anastasia in Zhitomir abbess Michaela (Furmanets) will examine the special nature of spiritual guidance in convents.

The work of the monastic forum will end with a final document and the adoption of proposals for holding the next congress.

According to the figures of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, at present there are active 258 monasteries and 56 hermitages in which there are approximately 5000 monks and nuns as inmates.

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