



## Supporters of the 'Orthodox Church of Ukraine' seize church building in the Vinnitsa region of Ukraine



On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 supporters of the schismatic structure known as the 'Orthodox Church of Ukraine' (OCU) seized in a raid the Church of St. John the Theologian belonging to the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) in the village of Krasnoselka in the Vinnitsa region of Ukraine, states the information department of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with reference to the Tulchyn diocese press service.

As told by the area dean of Bershad in the Tulchyn diocese archpriest Oleg Murakhovsky, at ten o'clock in the morning he received a phone call from the villagers who said that schismatics led by a 'priest of the OCU' Rostislav Protsanin and one Sergy Yarko appeared on the sealed-off territory of the church and tore the lock off the door belonging to one of the out buildings in which the community of the canonical Church was temporarily holding services. At the same time, there were parked by the church two police vehicles, supposedly to 'ensure order.' The supporters of the OCU compelled the priest of the rural community of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church Fr. Andrei Kozyuk to go into the out building, the windows and doors of which had been smashed by the OCU people, in order to pick up his belongings 'as tomorrow they will no longer be there.'

The dean informed the authorities of these unlawful acts but the investigators arrived late on the scene. It was only after a phone to the hotline of the Ukrainian ministry of the interior that the police began to take statements, by which time the organizer of the seizure of the church building Rostislav Protsanin

had already left.

Supporters of the 'OCU' have tried to seize the Church of St. John the Theologian since 2019 after a series of unlawful gatherings of the villagers obliging them to transfer the church building for the use of the 'OCU'. The religious community of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church insisted upon its right to the church building and its out building for its legitimate use. During this time services were not held and the church was sealed off by the police. It was also stated that there were attempts to evict the family of the priest of the canonical Church from the church house.

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