Panel discussion on “Fanar’s actions in Ukraine: Reflection in the media space” at Faith and Word festival



On October 20, 2021, during the 9th International Faith and Word Festival held from October 18-22 at the Klyazma rest house, a panel discussion on “Fanar’s Actions in Ukraine: Reflection in the Media Space”, a major international event, took place as part of the festival.

Among the participants in the discussion were Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, secretary for inter-Orthodox relations, Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate; Protodeacon Alexander Karpenko, editor-in-chief, Foma v Ukraine magazine; V. Anisimov, head of the press service, Ukrainian Orthodox Church; Archpriest Octavian Moshin, editor-in-chief of Altar Very magazine, Orthodox Church of Moldova. There were also representatives of Local Orthodox Churches and foreign journalists. In their remarks, experts dealt with the most problematic aspects of inter-Orthodox relations as developed in the last years.

Before delivering his remarks, Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk read out a message of greeting from Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and All Moldova. Father Igor indicated the major mass media that covered the official positions both of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Patriarchate of Constantinople and pointed to the most debatable issues raised in the information space with regard to

Constantinople-caused legalization of representatives of schismatic communities.

Protodeacon Alexander Karpenko noted that the Orthodox mass media in Ukraine remain the only resources that give information about facts of captures and lawless re-registration of churches and violations of rights of the clergy and faithful.

The head of the press service of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, V. Anisimov, described the holding of the so-called “uniting council” in Ukraine as “a crime without punishment”. “Along with explaining the historical context and anti-canonical actions of Constantinople, it is extremely important today to press the state and society for a legal and lawful solution of the problem. It is extremely important that justice should be restored through state mechanisms, while the press should help propagate the reliable information”, he stressed.

Archpriest Nikola Pejovic, Serbian Orthodox Church, presented a short film “Until the Victory of Christ” devoted to the most important episodes of the vigil held by Orthodox Serbs in Montenegro for Orthodox shrines and traditional values. “I am confident that God’s truth will prevail in Ukraine just as it has prevailed in Montenegro, but much effort is to be exerted to achieve it”, he said.

Ms Yanina Alekseyeva, a journalist and the leader of the Orthodox Education Society in Bulgaria, spoke about the history of relationships between the Bulgarian Church and the Patriarchate of Constantinople and presented new academic publications on the Ukrainian issue, which are yet to be translated into Russian.

Ms. P. Docou, a journalist from Greece, made this comment: “I would like to point out that in my country the Greek mass media share the attitude adopted by Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople. Most of them are reluctant to look properly into what is happening in Ukraine. On the other hand, the European mass media are unaware of the Ukrainian issue at all. Most of them are rather hostile to us. Let me share my own opinion, because I live exactly at a place that is in the jurisdiction of Patriarch Bartholomew: he will not change his decision. He does not believe in dialogue; everyone should understand that. We should be ready for his creating many more problems. He does not accept the fact that he makes mistakes. And the Russian Church should, above all, make an influence on the public opinion on this issue, since the created schism has also created problems between Russia and Greece on many issues”.

Concluding the discussion, Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk underlined the unanimous opinion of those present as to the situation developed in inter-Orthodox relations. “Today we have had an opportunity to see that our point of view is also shared in other Orthodox countries. And this means that our efforts aimed to bring God’s truth to as many people as possible are bringing their fruits”, the representative of the DECR concluded.

Synodal Department for the Church’s Relations with Society and Mass Media/
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