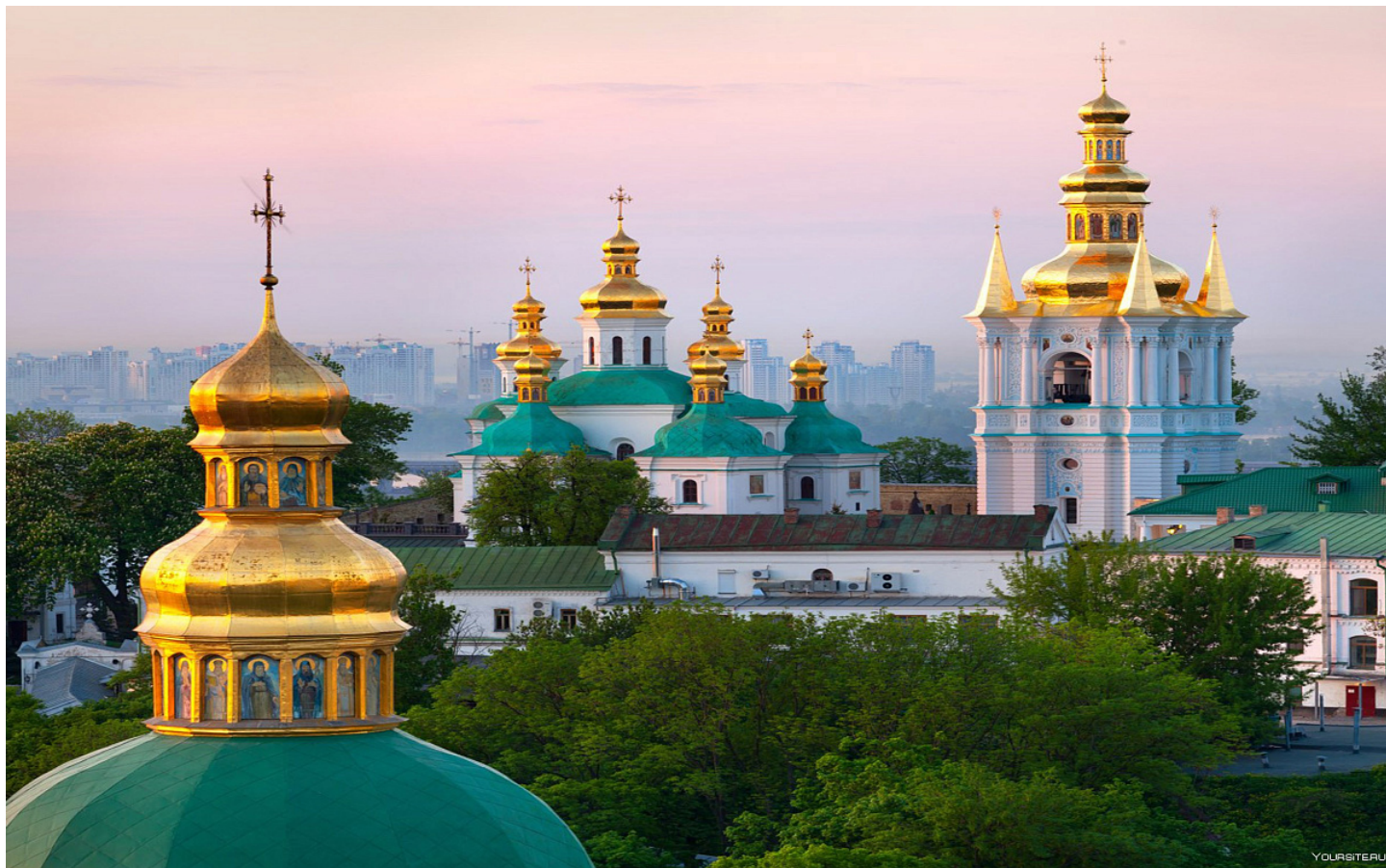




Metropolitan Timothy of Bostra: The sacred space of Kiev-Pechersk Lavra has become a new Calvary



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"This year in the long-suffering Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Holy Week has come early. It is with great sorrow that we learn that every village and every parish in Ukraine, which remain adamant [in adherence] to traditional piety and resist the imposition of newly created church orders, has been turned into Calvary. Martyr's crosses have been erected for the brother bishops, clergy and believers who have remained faithful to their Mother Church, in the bosom of which they were baptised and brought up," stressed Metropolitan Timothy of Bostra, Exarch of the Jerusalem Patriarchate in Cyprus, in a **message** he sent on the eve of Easter to Metropolitan Pavlo of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl, vicar of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra.

"It pains us that our brother bishops have been subjected to humiliating checks and stripped of their Ukrainian citizenship, that priests and faithful have been beaten and harassed, and forcibly expelled from the holy churches where they have prayed for decades," Metropolitan Timothy stressed.

He noted that "the other day the sacred space of Kiev-Pechersk Lavra turned into a new Golgotha after President Vladimir Zelensky and the competent authorities, reminiscent of the 'Sanhedrin', crucified the Ukrainian Orthodox Church by terminating the cooperation agreement". Metropolitan Timothy points out that as a result of this decision it is intended to expel the clergy and seminarians from the monastery in order to hand over the leadership of the Lavra to the newly formed "OCU", while also forcing numerous monks living there to recognize this structure as the new church leadership and obey the newly appointed abbot.

"In particular, your house arrest, dear Vladyko, - the one who over the years has made many efforts to restore the Lavra from the ashes - is also disturbing and distressing," the letter stated. - The very sight of you being held before a judicial authority in chains on your hands and with a bracelet on your feet like a criminal is shocking and brings to mind a quotation from the Gospel: I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will scatter (Matthew 26:31)".

The hierarch of the Church of Jerusalem addressed Metropolitan Paul with words of heartfelt compassion and sincere support, saying: "May the Lord grant you patience, strength of body and fortitude in faith in the face of suffering, of which our Lord warned: If they persecute Me, they will also persecute you (John 15:20). Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

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