Metropolitan Daniel of Vidin: the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church are enduring violence owing to their faith



Metropolitan Daniel of Vidin (Bulgarian Orthodox Church) has made a video appeal speaking in particular about the persecutions against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

He pointed to the suffering of the faithful of the canonical Church ‘who are enduring violence because of their faith’. ‘The Ukrainian Orthodox Church has proved that she is the mother of this people, who cares for her children. And at the same time the authorities and a greater part of people with strongly nationalistic conscience cannot tolerate their compatriots who profess the Orthodox faith’, the hierarch stressed.

His Eminence said, ‘Actually in preparation are thr laws which will make it impossible for Ukrainians to profess the Orthodox faith. Why? - Because there is an ‘ecclesiastical’ structure created a few years ago with a vital part played in it by the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which not without good reason is not recognized by a majority of the Orthodox Churches. It has many problems with the hierarchy

composed of non-ordained persons who have been declared as bishops and priests. Ukrainians, being aware of this, have tolerated the persecutions for several years now. Now they see how those who captured churches of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, who burned and destroyed them, now pray in churches seized for the ‘OCU’. It eloquently shows what sort of faith and what sort of views they have and for this reason people do not want to join them as they see that the question here is not the faith but hard nationalism. It is not the Orthodox faith but ‘Ukraine is above all!’

As the Bulgarian hierarch noted, this pronounced nationalism also manifests intolerance towards those who identify themselves as Ukrainians. ‘And what else can be said about those who connect themselves with Russia and about ethnic Russians?’ ‘The holy Prince Vladimir, who baptized the people, whose tsar was he - Ukrainians or Russians? Which people was baptized in Kiev - was they Ukrainian or Russian or a one people from whom these two nations have descended?... Metropolitan Daniel poses the question to think about. There were aspirations for independence, but there is a multitude of people who consider themselves and the Russian people to be a single whole. And it is small wonder after the four centuries of being together’.

This intolerance towards the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has not appeared today, the archpastor said, ‘Already the first president after the 2014 coup, Petr Poroshenko, intended to create an ‘ecclesiastical’ structure ‘OCU’, which was separated with the help of the Patriarch of Constantinople who granted ‘tomos’ to it. Under Petr Poroshenko from 2014 to 2019, in the end of his rule, a bill on banning the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was conceived and discussed. It was already back then that the cause was given to nationalistically-tuned people for capturing churches and incorporating them to the ‘OCU’.

‘No nation can accept such a thing but in Ukraine it does take place’, Metropolitan Daniel stressed, ‘We can see that it is not only the faith that is threatened but also the very physical existence of people who do not wish to be in the ‘OCU’. Then let us ask ourselves the question: Do these people need protection? Why does nobody speak about what is happening? Why anywhere those who collaborated with Nazi Germany were condemned because such a thing is not tolerated in a society, but in Ukraine it is not only permitted but also praised? It clearly points to the duplicity and hypocrisy of politicians who shut their eyes to what is happening’.

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