



## **Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral Ioanikije: Woe to those who rejoice in the crimes committed against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.**



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On 7<sup>th</sup> July 2023 the metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral Ioanikije at the end of the divine liturgy at Cetinje Monastery delivered a homily to the gathered faithful. In his sermon metropolitan Ioanikije paid special attention to events at the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, reports the information and education department of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with a link to the press service of the metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral.

“Today we prayed for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, for the holy Monastery of the Caves in Kiev, and especially for metropolitan Onuphrius, who yesterday was forbidden from entering his residence in the monastery,” said metropolitan Ioanikije.

The metropolitan noted that today is a time of the most terrible persecutions: “Such persecution of Orthodox Christians has not been seen since the time of the October Revolution. It is a terrible persecution of Orthodox Christians and a terrible assault upon the Orthodox faith. And this unfortunately

is happening before the eyes of the world which remains silent about this flagrant injustice and violation of human and religious rights.”

Metropolitan Ioanikije stated that those who commit crimes against the Church or rejoice in them are condemned people.

In our time, when the authorities in Montenegro have set their sights on Orthodox churches, one person has predicted the forthcoming demise of this regime, even though it would appear to enjoy power, said the metropolitan. When this man was asked how did he know about this, he replied that his late grandfather told him of a similar situation in the Austro-Hungarian empire when bells were removed from church buildings and taken to factories for smelting. The grandfather of this man was at the time witness to how one pious Christian from his village said as soon as the authorities begin these iniquitous acts, then they will be taken to their conclusion.

“Today, dear brothers and sisters, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, headed by His Beatitude metropolitan Onuphrius, who is a pillar of Orthodoxy, is ascending Golgotha. She endured Golgotha on the eve of the feast of John the Baptist, who was beheaded for preaching God’s truth. And today we must remember the sufferings of our Orthodox brothers and sisters in Ukraine who are subjected to terrible humiliation, the seizure of holy sites and their desecration, the cruel treatment of and physical assaults upon priests, monks and nuns. And what is worse of all is that most of the world looks upon these terrible crimes without saying a word. However, we firmly believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified and rose from the dead, through his power and love is with those who today suffer in Ukraine for God’s truth, and that Saint John the Baptist, who was beheaded for God’s truth, is with them,” stated metropolitan Ioanikije.

In these complex trials in which the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has found herself, her primate, bishops, clergy and laymen and laywomen are guided by God’s truth and preach love: they forgive all, they do not judge and condemn people who are hostile towards them, and yet at the same time they bear witness to the truth and to the fact that they are compelled to endure humiliations, the plundering of churches, cruel treatment and the beating up of priests and the persecution of the faithful, said metropolitan Ioanikije in summing up.