



## His Holiness Patriarch Kirill: “The actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople have paved the way for ecclesiastical disorder.”



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In his presentation at the Bishops' Convocations of 19<sup>th</sup> July 20203 His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill noted that the Church's saving ministry throughout her entire history has encountered a hostile power which has acquired and continues to acquire ever new means of countering the mission of the Gospel by appealing to the human passions of ambition, greed, pusillanimity and envy.

“Unfortunately, there are those too who call themselves ministers of God who are not free from the influence of the ‘spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places’ (cf. Ephesians 6.12) that have compelled them into destroying church unity,” said His Holiness. “I mean in the first instance the anti-canonical actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in Ukraine which have paved the way for church disorder

and to the long-term and at present serious persecution of Orthodox Christians within Ukraine.”

As Patriarch Kirill noted, the Patriarchate of Constantinople has become one of the instruments of the war against Orthodoxy, and her leading bishops, aided by political forces external to the Church, have now for a long time been ready to tear apart the unity of Orthodoxy, have undertaken secret negotiations and have intrigues in motion.

“We were aware of the damage to the canonical foundations of the Church and her unity which the planned unwarranted actions of Constantinople could cause. The Russian Church did all within her power for ecclesiastical unity to be preserved,” His Holiness the Patriarch emphasized. “In August of 2018 I visited Istanbul. Of course, even then I was not convinced that our conversation would dissuade the Primate of the Church of Constantinople, but nonetheless I believed it necessary to personally inform Patriarch Bartholomew of the objective picture of the situation in Ukraine. Patriarch Bartholomew preferred not to listen, and in the autumn of 2018, in violation of the sacred canons, he intervened in Ukraine in order to ‘cancel’ the hierarchy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and legitimize the schism by granting an illusory autocephaly to it. In September of 2018 uninvited ‘exarchs’ of Constantinople arrived in Kiev. In response to this, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church was compelled to adopt a resolution ceasing the commemoration of the Primate of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and of the impossibility of concelebration with its bishops, having warned them of the threat of the disruption of eucharistic communion. But,” noted Patriarch Kirill, “the Synod at the Phanar on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018 declared to be ‘invalid’ the historical decisions to transfer the metropolitanate of Kiev to the Patriarchate of Moscow and also ‘restored to holy orders’ those leaders of schismatic groupings with whom they had entered into communion.”

“And it is with great sorrow that we were compelled to adopt a resolution on the impossibility of continuing eucharistic communion with the Patriarchate of Constantinople, as the canons demanded,” said His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill.

He reminded those present that the subsequent endeavours of the Phanar and its external supporters were aimed at receiving support from the other Local Orthodox Churches. “It took little time for the Primates of the Churches of Greece, Alexandria and Cyprus to accept the decisions made by Constantinople by using ethnophile arguments and under severe pressure from individuals who have nothing to do with the Church and with the flagrant violation of conciliar established procedures. It is noteworthy that there was no conciliar discussion of the Ukrainian issue whatsoever within the Church of Alexandria, and in the other Churches which I have mentioned the conciliar and synodal statements bore a vague and ambiguous nature,” said His Holiness.

“We must understand clearly that it is influential political forces in the world that are hostile not only

towards Russia and Orthodoxy, but also, as we can now judge, towards the Christian worldview as a whole, who have set themselves and pursue a goal which is broader than merely the spiritual isolation of the Ukrainian people and their being set against the fraternal Russian people with whom they are extremely close spiritually and with whom they comprise a single Orthodox civilization going back to the time of Holy Russia,” noted the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church. “Another, and more global, aim is to tear asunder or weaken to the limit the spiritual ties between our Eastern Slavic Orthodox world and the Orthodox community of the Mediterranean and the Middle East. And yet one more task undertaken by forces hostile to Orthodoxy is to hinder the preservation of the Christian foundations of the cradle of modern-day civilization which is Europe.”

“In other words, everything is being done to destroy Orthodoxy and in the final run to destroy the entire Christian heritage in principle,” concluded His Holiness the Patriarch.

In part the goal of causing division among the Orthodox has been attained, said Patriarch Kirill: “The schism initiated by the Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew has made it extremely difficult for the Russian Church to maintain spiritual ties with a significant part of the Greek Orthodox world. This has of course weakened noticeably the voice of Orthodox witness in the modern world, which appears to be what the ideologues and commissioners of the schism wanted.”

And yet, His Holiness believes, the Church’s enemies have not attained their aim fully. “Even within the Greek Orthodox Church there are not a few courageous bishops, priests and theologians who have refused to recognize the illegitimate actions of Constantinople, who have not entered into communion with the schismatic pseudo-ecclesiastical leaders calling themselves metropolitans and bishops,” said His Holiness Patriarch Kirill. He also pointed out that the majority of the Local Orthodox Churches “have clearly refused to recognize the newly-formed organization consisting of schismatics as well as the ‘new ecclesiology’ of the Patriarchate of Constantinople that stands behind this act.”