



## **Patriarch Kirill gives his blessing to offering up fervent prayers for archpastors and clerics of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church striving to preserve church unity**



### **DECR Communication Service, 30.10.2023.**

On October 26, 2023, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', Metropolitan Grigoriy of Voskresensk, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, sent a circular letter to all diocesan bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church with an appeal to offer up augmented prayers for the archpastors and clerics of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church who are held prisoners and also for all the faithful striving to preserve church unity and performing a feat of confessors by standing up for this unity, Patriarchia.ru reports.

“Over the past eighteen months, persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church by the Ukrainian state authorities has took a new turn: discriminatory bills related to the canonical Church are being passed, intolerance to clerics and flock and hatred for them are being stirred up, illegal seizure of religious sites is taking place, searches are being conducted at the places of residence of hierarchs and clerics.

Clergymen come under crude pressure from special services by humiliating interrogation and from over-exited mob that often unites schismatics with the most exotics pagans and with people alien to any faith,” the circular letter says.

The document underscores that incidents of arrests and beating of clergymen of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and desecration of the holy sites are recorded and that legal actions have been taken against some archpastors of the canonical Church. For example, Metropolitan Feodosiy of Cherkassy and Kanev “is still under house arrest”, while Metropolitan Ionafan of Tulchin and Bratslav has been sentenced to five years in prison.”

Also, the document notes that communities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church are evicted from churches and monasteries, ‘the Kiev Lavra of the Caves is under the threat of closure, while its abbot, Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod, earlier placed in preventive detention, is now under house arrest.”

“With the blessing of the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, I ask all of you, dear bishops, to follow the Bishops’ Conference held on 19 July 2023 in calling clergymen, monastics and laypersons in dioceses entrusted to your care to offer up augmented prayers for the Right Reverend archpastors, pastors, monastics and laypersons of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church who despite threats, slander, and persecution are striving to preserve church unity, and especially for those who perform the feat of confessors by courageously raising their voice in defense of this unity,” the chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate urged.

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