

## **Councils of Russian Orthodox Church's dioceses in Germany issue joint statement concerning the situation caused by anti-canonical actions of Patriarchate of Constantinople in Ukraine**



On the 29th of November 2018, the first joint session of the Diocesan Councils of the diocese of Berlin and Germany of the Moscow Patriarchate and the diocese of Germany of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia took place at the Convent of the Venerable Martyr Elizabeth the Grand Duchess in Buchendorf, in the suburb of Munich.

Earlier that day, the Diocesan Council of the diocese of Berlin and Germany held a meeting at the Southern Diocesan Residence in Munich. Archbishop Tikhon of Podolsk, administrator of the diocese, greeted the participants in the meeting and noted that the Orthodox Church is going through difficult times, and suggested discussing the decision of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church concerning the break-off of the Eucharistic communion with the Patriarchate of Constantinople due to its anti-canonical actions in Ukraine. The members of the

Council also considered petitions of local clergymen for the opening of new communities and parishes in the territory of Germany and discussed the progress in making a grave cross for the burial place of Archbishop Theophan (Galinski) of the blessed memory. Mr. Andrei Mololkin, reader of the Church of the Great Martyr Barbara in the city of Krefeld, presented a report that was based on the document of the Moscow Patriarchate's Chancery, entitled 'Road Map of Immediate Measures Aimed at Creating and Promoting Favourable Conditions for the Religious Education of Children at Parish Communities of the Russian Orthodox Church,' and that took into account the specificity of the diocese of Berlin and Germany.

The participants in the joint session of the Diocesan Councils of the diocese of Berlin and Germany of the Moscow Patriarchate and the diocese of Germany of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia discussed a plan of joint actions for 2019, as well as the current state and prospects of youth work in Germany.

The members of the Diocesan Councils also discussed the situation caused by the anti-canonical actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and their repercussions for the inter-Orthodox cooperation in Germany. The following joint statement was adopted at the result of the meeting:

"The Diocesan Councils of the diocese of Berlin and Germany of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and of the diocese of Germany of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, at the results of the joint session held on the 29th of November 2018, resolved to support the decision of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church of the 15th of October (Minutes No. 71) on the recognition of impossibility to continue the Eucharistic communion with the Patriarchate of Constantinople in view of the ongoing anti-canonical actions of the latter.

"The current situation grieves the hearts of all faithful children of the Russian Orthodox Church, including those living in Germany. During the past decades the conciliar unity of Orthodoxy found its visible expression abroad in the collaborative work of hierarchs of the Local Churches united in bishops' conferences. The actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople do not only make it difficult to continue the fruitful cooperation, but also contravene the basics of the Orthodox conciliarity, in particular, the principle of consensus and equality in the Orthodox Diaspora.

"The archpastors and clergy of both dioceses express their full support to His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine, the hierarchs, clergy and all the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and lift up prayers that they may be strengthened in courageously defending the Truth and the unity of the Church in

Ukraine. We deem it necessary to emphasize that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is already autonomous and independent in all key spheres of its activities. The Patriarchate of Constantinople's demonstrative neglect of this indisputable fact leads to the tragic consequences for all the Ukrainian people.

“Together with the plenitude of the Russian Orthodox Church we pin our hopes on God's mercy and believe that despite the intrigues of the archfiend the unity of the Church of Christ will remain unshaken. We consider it expedient and necessary to support the proposal of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, as well as of other heads and hierarchs of the Local Churches to convene a Pan-Orthodox Synaxis with the view of working out decisions aimed at overcoming the crisis in the universal Orthodoxy.”

Website of the diocese of Berlin and Germany/DECR Communication Service/Patriarchia.ru

