

Clergy of canonical Ukrainian Church serve with Patriarch Ilia of Georgia



Several clergymen of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church recently had the blessing of concelebrating the Divine Liturgy with His Holiness Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II of Georgia.

The concelebration came during a recent pilgrimage of clergy and faithful from the Mukachevo Diocese of the Ukrainian Church, undertaken from October 16 to 23 with the blessing of Metropolitan Theodore of Mukachevo and Uzhgorod.

One of the visiting clerics, Archpriest Igor Bilak, the Chairman of the Diocesan Department for Interaction with the Armed Forces of Ukraine, wrote about the service with Pat. Ilia on his Facebook page, reports the Union of Orthodox Journalists.

Photo: Facebook The clergy of Mukachevo served with His Holiness on October 20 at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Tbilisi. The Ukrainian and Georgian faithful were also blessed with the presence of the precious and incorrupt head of St. Thomas the

Apostle, and the other holy relics and icons of the cathedral.

“We are grateful to the Lord for His boundless mercy and blessings in our lives,” writes Fr. Igor.

In several posts on his Facebook page, Fr. Igor reports that the pilgrimage group visited the famous and ancient Svetitskhoveli Cathedral in Mtskheta, where the Ukrainian clergy celebrated together with the their brother clergy of the Georgian Church, Samtavro Monastery, also in Mtskheta, where the relics of St. Gabriel (Urgebade) and an exact copy of the Cross of St. Nina repose, and several other monasteries.

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“We are grateful to God for His blessing on our trip to the holy places of Orthodox Georgia and to the ruling hierarch of the Mukachevo Diocese, Metropolitan Theodore of Mukachevo and Uzhgorod, for his blessing for our pilgrimage,” Fr. Igor writes.

While the Georgian Synod has not taken a formal stance on the Ukrainian crisis, and a number of Georgian hierarchs have publicly expressed support for the schismatic “Orthodox Church of Ukraine,” it is known that Pat. Ilia himself strongly

opposes Constantinople's interference in Ukraine.

In January, Metropolitan Nikoloz (Pachuashvili) of Akhalkalaki, Kumurdo and Kari of the Georgian Church said that Georgian hierarchs and clergy cannot serve with or recognize the unordained "clerics" of the OCU.

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