

Two metropolitans leave Ukrainian Church to join new nationalist church created by Constantinople



Two metropolitans, formerly of the canonical Ukrainian Church, voluntarily entered into schism today by joining the new nationalist church created by Constantinople at today's "unification council."

Former Metropolitan Alexander Drabinko of Pereyaslav-Khmelnytsky and former Metropolitan Simeon Shostasky of Vinnitsa "are creating a new church and transferring to it," commented His Eminence Archbishop Clement of Nizhyn and Prilutsk, the head of the Ukrainian Church's Information Department, reports BBC Ukraine.

Met. Simeon was widely speculated to be Constantinople's preferred choice to head the new church, as he boasts a canonical consecration, whereas the winner, "Metropolitan" Epiphany Dumenko, cannot. Orthodoxy also reports that Poroshenko unsuccessfully tried to pressure the bishops at the "council" today to choose Met. Simeon at the request of Constantinople.

Asked whether any ecclesiastical sanctions would be placed on the two bishops, Abp. Clement answered that "they no longer have any relation to the UOC."

"If they were in the UOC, then some kind of step could be applied to them... We only state that they went into schism, and we will notify the Local Churches that they no longer appear in the diptychs of the canonical bishops of Ukraine," Abp.

Clement explained.

The two former metropolitans chose to excommunicate themselves, the canonical hierarch explained, and “We can only state this with sadness.”

The Holy Synod of the canonical Ukrainian Church forbade its hierarchs, clergy, monastics, and laity from participating in today’s “council” on December 7.

For his part, His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev), the head of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations, referred to the betrayal of Judas in the Gospels, reports RIA-Novosti.

Noting that 88 of the 90 bishops of the canonical Ukrainian Church did not attend the “council,” he said: “And only two went to the ‘council of the wicked’... The participation of two hierarchs from the canonical Church in this event, aimed at its destruction, of course, cannot but be grieved. But let us not forget that among the 12 apostles there was one Judas. If there had been 90 apostles, you could expect there to be six or seven Judases, not two.”