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I know that Met. Onuphry is a man of prayer who avoids clashes, Abp. of Albania tells Ukrainian delegation



His Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry of Kiev and All Ukraine, the beloved primate of the canonical Ukrainian Church, is a man of great prayer who does all he can to avoid clashes and places his hope in God, His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios of Albania believes.

The Albanian primate expressed his view on the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and on the Ukrainian primate during a meeting with a delegation of the UOC in Tirana yesterday, January 29, reports the UOC's Department for External Church Relations.

“I insist that in the end, schisms are overcome by Ecumenical Councils, and not by letters or anything else… I want to tell you that I read everything that comes to us from Ukraine with great attention,” Abp. Anastasios said. In his recent Nativity epistle, he urgently called for the Patriarch of Constantinople to convene a council to deal with the Ukrainian crisis.

“And we are familiar with all the trials you are undergoing, and with all the unworthy things happening to you. God will not forsake us, that’s for sure!” the Albanian primate emphasized.

Abp. Anastasios also asked the Ukrainian delegation, led by His Grace Bishop Viktor of Baryshevka, to convey words of love and sympathy for their trials to Met. Onuphry.

“There will certainly be a resolution. I’m sure. And I know that Metropolitan Onuphry is a man of prayer who avoids clashes and tension and puts his hope in God,” Abp. Anastasios said.

He also emphasized that he is experiencing what is happening in the UOC as a personal tragedy, and urged the faithful not to lose hope.

“From the moment we dedicate our entire life to Christ, He will at some point give a resolution. I must tell you frankly that I have been feeling sick for a year already when I follow these events. That is, it’s not just something happening far away. I feel like it’s happening to me,” the Archbishop said.

“And I feel that three fundamental principles of the Orthodox Church have been violated: Apostolic Succession, the Divine Eucharist, and conciliarity,” he added, underlining that the Orthodox Church is not a confederation of Local Churches, but a united Church.

The Albanian primate also emphasized, as he has several times before, that from the time that “Patriarch” Philaret Denisenko was defrocked, excommunicated, and anathematized, he had no right to ordain anyone, thus the “hierarchs” and “clergy” of the schismatic “Orthodox Church of Ukraine” have no Apostolic Succession. He has also lamented in the past that Pat. Bartholomew chose to act in a reckless, unilateral fashion in granting autocephaly to the schismatic OCU.

Nevertheless, he is also strongly against the Russian Church's response of breaking communion with the Patriarchate of Constantinople and feels that it is a hindrance to solving the present crisis.

Abp. Anastasios also spoke about the history of the trials of the Albanian Church during the communist era, and summed up: "You are not just experiencing the Cross now. There is Resurrection in the Cross that you are now carrying. And I am sure that faith and piety are deeper in pain, when it hurts. From my experience, I can say that those people who have not experienced any pain are not mature people; they do not have a deep faith."

Then there was a sincere, warm and spiritual communication between the Albanian primate and priests and laity from the Khmelnytsky region who survived the seizure of their churches. The Ukrainian pilgrims were also shown a short film about the revival of Orthodoxy in Albania and the formation of the Albanian Orthodox Church.

At the end of the conversation, the Ukrainian delegation sang the Paschal troparion and presented Abp. Anastasios with a large picture of the Kiev Caves Lavra and a copy of the Brailovo-Czestochowa Icon of the Mother of God.

Bp. Viktor later shared his impressions of the conversation on his Telegram channel , noting that the hour and a half long talk "flew by like an instant" and that Met. Anastasios is distinguished by "an extraordinary depth of thought and purity of mind, and his face shines with Christ's true love."

The Ukrainian hierarch writes that he left the residence of the Archbishop "with a feeling of spiritual fulfillment and ascension."

— Source: orthochristian.com