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Pat. Bartholomew: We pray that the Churches would have more respect for Constantinople



Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople again promised that nothing can change his mind about granting autocephaly to Ukrainian schismatics no matter how much the Local Orthodox Churches protest. He also expressed his desire that the Churches would learn to respect Constantinople more.

A video of the traditional cutting of the Vasilopita bread on December 31 at the Patriarchate was posted on the Light of the Phanar blog in which the Patriarch confirms his intention to complete the “great historical event” and grant autocephaly to the newly-created nationalist Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

Pat. Bartholomew is planning to give a tomos of autocephaly on January 6 to “Metropolitan” Epiphany Dumenko who was elected as the primate of the schismatic Ukrainian church on December 15.

In the introductory speech, Pat. Bartholomew acknowledges that the Patriarchate’s actions and decisions regarding Ukraine have faced “a lot of tough opposition,” but

that “this will not be an obstacle for us, because we base our decision on the holy canons, on the privileges of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and on the order and traditions of Orthodoxy.”

Further, Pat. Bartholomew expresses his view that opposition to the initiatives of Constantinople from the Orthodox Churches of the world is unjust.

“We pray that the sister Churches which unjustly oppose the decisions and initiatives of the first throne of the Constantinople Church would finally begin to think logically and fairly, with great respect and gratitude to the Church of our Ecumenical Patriarchate,” the Patriarch said.

Whereas the Russian Church and the canonical Ukrainian Church and the other Synods and primates who have commented on the matter view the issue within the framework of synodality vs. unilateralism, calling on Constantinople to resolve this issue at a pan-Orthodox council, or at least in concert with Moscow, Constantinople frames the issue as respecting or disrespecting its Patriarchate and the Greek people as a whole.

Pat. Bartholomew has characterized the struggle over Ukraine precisely as a clash of ethnicities: “Our Slav brothers can’t stand the precedence that our Ecumenical Patriarchate has, nor, consequently, our people in worldwide Orthodoxy.”

In the same speech he also said: “Whether our Russian brothers like it or not, sooner or later, they will follow the decisions of the Ecumenical Patriarch, because they have no other choice.”

In the past Pat. Bartholomew and Constantinople have also emphasized the need for conciliarity in the Church, including specifically on the issue of granting autocephaly, though that stance has played no part in the current Ukrainian crisis.

The same approach can also be seen in a recent article from His Eminence Metropolitan Hierotheos (Vlachos) of Nafpaktos where he quotes from Protopresbyter Stefanos Avramidis, the Secretary of the Synodical Commission on Inter-Orthodox and Inter-Christian Relations of the Church of Greece, who participated in the session of the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission in 2009 that attempted to find consensus on how autocephaly should be granted in the Orthodox Church.

Of those bishops who disagreed with the position of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Fr. Stefanos writes: “These did not maintain any philhellenic position”—that is, he views their disagreement as a lack of love for Greeks.

The strongest opposition to Constantinople’s actions has come from the Serbian and Polish Churches which officially rejected the rehabilitation of the Ukrainian schismatics and refused to enter into communion with them.

Source: orthochristian.com