

## **“It is unreasonable to stop a schism at the price of the unity of the Orthodox world”—Pat. John of Antioch**



Responding to Patriarch Bartholomew's request to recognize the results of December 15's "unification council" and the nationalist Ukrainian church created there, His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch urged Pat. Bartholomew to stop the process of granting autocephaly until a pan-Orthodox solution could be found to the Ukrainian crisis.

As [orthochristian.com](http://orthochristian.com) reported, Pat. Bartholomew did not heed this advice, but instead handed a tomos of autocephaly to "Metropolitan" Epiphany Dumenko, the primate of the schismatic Ukrainian church, on Sunday, January 6, 2019, in Istanbul.

The Patriarch of Constantinople sent letters of appeal to recognize the Ukrainian church to all the primates of the Local Orthodox Churches on December 24. The request has thus far been explicitly denied by the Polish and Serbian Churches.

In his response, Pat. John emphasized that the events surrounding the creation of the new church cause concern not only because of the disunion they create in the Orthodox world, but also because the opinion of the Local Orthodox Churches was

not taken into account by Constantinople, reports the official site of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Synods, primates, and hierarchs of the Orthodox Churches from around the world continually warned Pat. Bartholomew that unilaterally creating a new church would have disastrous consequences and they called on him to convene a pan-Orthodox council to resolve the matter, though he repeatedly refused.

“We want to see the unity of the Orthodox world strengthened and consolidated,” Pat. John writes. “From your letter, it seems that you have decided to continue the process of granting autocephaly... Therefore, we call upon you to not make any decisions not supported by the consensus of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches. It is unreasonable to stop a schism at the price of the unity of the Orthodox world.”

His Beatitude also expressed confidence that “the most useful thing for peace in the Church, its unity, and for the common Orthodox witness in our world today is to stop and postpone this process until the Ukrainian problem is studied and a pan-Orthodox solution is found.”

“Therefore, we entreat Your All-Holiness to call your brother primates of the Orthodox Churches to study these issues, to protect our Church from danger, which leads to peace and harmony neither in Ukraine nor in the Orthodox world,” Pat. John writes.

“Our love for our Orthodox Church and Your beloved Holiness prompts us to write these words with the hope of seeing the Orthodox world united, especially in your wonderful era, bearing witness to the Truth of our Lord Jesus, incarnated for the sake of the salvation of the world,” His Beatitude Pat. John emphasized.

The Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Antioch also called for a pan-Orthodox council at its session in early October. Later that month, Pat. John signed a joint statement with His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia calling, again, for a pan-Orthodox council.

Pat. John previously expressed his support for the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the Moscow Patriarchate. After meeting with the Patriarch in June, Russian State Deputy Dmitry Sablin reported that, “The Patriarch noted that the Antiochian Church stands together with the Russian Church, speaking against the Church schism in Ukraine.”