02/02/2019

Hierarch of the Polish Orthodox Church: there must be conciliar resolution to church schism in Ukraine

The crisis in Ukraine caused by the establishment of the new church structure must only be resolved through consensus of all Local Orthodox Churches, Archbishop Abel of Lublin and Chełm said in an interview to the TASS news agency reporter on 31 January 2019. The hierarch of the Polish Orthodox Church arrived in Moscow to take part in the celebrations marking the 10th anniversary of enthronement of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

“The Orthodox Church of Poland emphasizes that the schism in Ukraine can only be healed through repentance. The Church has its own dogmatics and canon law, and we always criticize attempts of any sole entity to govern its life, as it is within the Roman Catholic Church. We always underscore our Orthodox conciliarity and insist that the Ukrainian issue must be resolved in the spirit of conciliar understanding of the problem,” he said.

As the archpastor noted, among those who arrived in Moscow for the anniversary of enthronement of the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church are

representatives of many Local Orthodox Churches who can express their position on the matter. “Many representatives of the Churches are taking part in the celebrations, and I believe that the Church Primates will be the source that will help put an end to various speculations and work out the common position. This issue cannot be settled otherwise,” Archbishop Abel added.

He emphasized that the Polish Church would not enter into communion with representatives of the so-called “Orthodox church of Ukraine” (OCU). “We regard them as schismatics, and the Church cannot be in communion with them. It is difficult to say why Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople took such decision, but it was made not in accordance with the Orthodox practice and discipline,” the archpastor also said.

The hierarch of the Polish Orthodox Church called the creation of the OCU a political step of the Ukrainian leadership. “In this politicians see an opportunity to strengthen their position and try, with the help of the Church’s voice, to build a better future for themselves. However, in this case everybody lost – Constantinople, the President of Ukraine and the schismatics themselves who did not receive the promised independence. Glory and honour be to the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church and its Primate for taking a firm stand and uniting the majority of the Orthodox faithful. In this we see the only prospect for the salvation of the Ukrainian people,” Archbishop Abel of Lublin and Chełm said in conclusion.

(TASS news agency / DECR Communication Service)