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RUSSIAN CHURCH BODY DELINEATES THREE CATEGORIES OF ECCLESIASTICAL OFFENSES



Meeting at Christ the Savior Cathedral under the chairmanship of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, the Inter-Council Presence of the Russian Orthodox Church adopted a document on canonical prohibitions yesterday in which it delineates three types of ecclesiastical offenses.

The document, “Provision on Canonical Prohibitions and the Disciplinary Punishments of Clergymen,” was adopted, including a number of amendments, following a thorough discussion by the Inter-Council Presence—a body of hierarchical, clerical, and lay representatives of the Church tasked with the discussion of issues raised at sessions of the Local Council of the Russian Church, reports the Patriarchia.ru.

The document will then be submitted for discussion and approval by the Bishops’ Council of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The text defines an “ecclesiastical offense” and prescribes canonical penalties and

disciplinary punishments to be imposed, depending on the severity of the offense committed and the accompanying circumstances.

In it, ecclesiastical offenses are described in detail and divided into three groups:

1. Offenses against the faith and Church unity
2. Offenses against the Church structure and administration
3. Offenses in the field of pastoral ministry

The document is intended to become a guide in the matter of imposing ecclesiastical prohibitions. Without replacing the canons of the Church in any way, it is intended to introduce uniformity in the sphere regulated by it, and at the same time, to consolidate the administrative penalties applied in practice that are not provided for by the canons.

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