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“THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THE HOLY CHURCH WILL CELEBRATE THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY OVER TODAY’S SCHISMS AND DISORDER”



Persecution and the seizures of its churches is making the canonical Church in Ukraine only stronger, said His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine to the ambassadors of Orthodox countries on the Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy...

On March 17, 2019, the day of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry served Divine Liturgy in the Holy Dormition Kiev Caves Lavra. Present at that service were ambassadors and consulate representatives from a number of countries where the vast majority of the populations confess the Orthodox faith. This was reported by the Information department of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the press service of the Department of External Church Relations.

These included the Belorussian ambassador Igor Sokol, the counsel to the Embassy

of the Greek Republic Basilios Bakalis, first secretary of the Embassy of the Republic of Moldova Ion Bulagra, temporary Russian counsel in Ukraine Alexander Lukashik, counsel and head of the Consular Department of the Romanian Embassy Cosmin Zurca, and first counsel of the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia Svetlana Kosutovic.

During the Liturgy His Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry commemorated at the Cherubic Hymn the primates of the Local Churches of the countries whose representatives were present. At the end of the Liturgy His Beatitude gave a brief homily addressed to the diplomats present.

His Beatitude Met. Onuphry's homily on the Triumph of Orthodoxy

On this day, the feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, I would like to especially greet the ambassadors and representatives of the embassies of these Orthodox nations—Belorussia, Greece, Moldova, Russia, Romania, and Serbia.

Our countries and peoples are united by our common Orthodox faith, and for us it has become a good tradition to share the joy of the feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy together with our brothers and sisters in the faith. Today Orthodoxy in Ukraine and throughout the world is experiencing difficult trials, about which all of us here know. But let not our hearts be troubled nor let us be in dread.

We firmly believe that the Holy Orthodox Church will emerge victorious from these trials, as it has many times in history. The time will come when the Holy Church will celebrate its Triumph also over today's schisms and disorders. It is important that we should remain true to Holy Orthodoxy, preserve the purity of the Orthodox faith, and then the Lord will preserve with His Protection every Orthodox people, every Local Orthodox Church, and each of our Orthodox countries.

Respected Ambassadors and representatives of the embassies of Orthodox countries! Accept my heartfelt gratitude for your presence here today and for praying with us at Divine Liturgy. May the Lord protect you, make you steadfast, and bless all of our God-loving Orthodox peoples of the world with growth and prosperity for many, blessed years!

Met. Onuphry's speech at the reception for the diplomats after the Liturgy, concerning the current situation in the Ukrainian Church

"This feast has its beginning from the year 843, when on the first Sunday of Great Lent the clergy and faithful made a Cross procession along the streets of Constantinople bearing the holy icons in their hands. This day is considered the

victory of the Church over the heresy of iconoclasm, which had tormented the Body of the Church for a long time before this. Since that time, every year on the first Sunday of Great Lent the Holy Church has celebrated this feast and has vested it with an even greater significance—the triumph of the Church over all heresies and schisms. Although after this and up till our own times there have been no few upheavals in the Church, history nevertheless testifies that with the help and grace of the God, the Church of Christ has successfully overcome them all.

Since our last meeting together a year ago here in this Holy Lavra of our Ukrainian Orthodox Church, all of world Orthodoxy has once again been met with serious challenges, about which you all know. Today our Ukrainian Orthodox Church is experiencing a time of its own trials. However, these trials bring benefit to the Church. Our churches are being taken away from us, but our communities are remaining true to the Church and are becoming even stronger. Our Church is being slandered, but our temples are filled with people who do not believe in falsehood but seek the truth. As the holy apostle Paul said, Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat (1 Cor. 4:12-13).

Why doesn't the Church disappear? Why doesn't Orthodoxy perish? Because the Church was created by our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, Who said that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church (Matt. 16:18). This is because the Church is the work of God's hands, and not of man's. It is my deepest conviction that if 2000 years ago the Lord had simply created the Holy Church and not purchased it with His Blood (compare Acts 20:28), then our world might not have survived to this day. The end of human history would have come much earlier. But by His coming, the Lord through His death on the Cross and Resurrection, by His teaching gave new life to this world. Yes, sin continues to exist in the world, but as we know from Holy Scripture: where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Rom. 5:20). Our world today needs sanctity, and this sanctity is in the Church.

Often politicians, men of government, and secular people in general accept the Church as exclusively some kind of social or ideological power, ignoring or not understanding its mystical, spiritual nature. Of course, the Church has great potential, but if the Church turns into no more than a social or ideological structure, serving someone's earthly interests and forgetting its heavenly, divine origin, then it loses its strength, it loses its evangelical salt, about which the Savior speaks. Today the Church is ceasing to be the Church. And the hearts of believing people feel this very subtly. That is why our churches are full, as you have seen today. It is because the Church has not lost its power; because the Church has not ceased to be the source of divine grace; because the Church has not ceased to be the well of

living water to which every faithful soul comes to quench its spiritual thirst. As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsted for God, the mighty, the living (Ps. 41:1-2), says the holy prophet David.

Your Excellencies, respected Ambassadors and representatives of Orthodox nations!

I feel that on this day we keep the remembrance of the power and meaning of the Church and our Orthodox faith, the meaning of the Church as a place where God is present on Earth, in our peoples and in our nations. Of course, wherever God acts and sows His good seed, there the devil immediately tries to sow his tares, as the Gospel parable tells us. Good and evil are present in this world and develop parallel to each other, but this should not trouble us—after all God is present and acts amidst us, and we are called to be His co-workers, to be on the side of good, on the side of God. It seems to me that as long as our countries have the Orthodox Church in them, through which the Lord calls our people to Himself, we will remain intact in history, we will not disappear. The history of many of our Orthodox peoples who were long under the rule of the heterodox and did not have their own sovereignty but then restored or received it, preserving throughout their faithfulness to God and His Holy Church, is a clear example of this.

Met. Onuphry at the close of his speech asked the diplomats to send his respectful greetings to the primates of their Church, and expressed his wish that “The Lord would preserve all our Local Orthodox Churches in unity, help us overcome all schisms and disorder, and preserve our peoples, nations, and all of us—His servants and faithful children in peace and oneness of mind!”

Metropolitan Onuphry (Berezovsky)

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<http://orthochristian.com/119996.html>