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Patriarch of Alexandria: Putin, the emperor of our times



“Putin thinks he’s the emperor of our times. Power can get you drunk. And the great authoritarian power blinds the eyes and you forget that you are human. It is not possible to cross yourself, pray to God, and at the same time kill children and people in general”.

This was stressed by Patriarch Theodore II of Alexandria and All Africa, who knows the Russian president personally, speaking on the state radio of Greece.
“Yes, there is piety that satisfies the soul – “Yes, Lord, I love you, I pray”, but on the other hand, great power is spread and he says,” Prayer is good, humility is good, but I am a powerful one and I want to impose my opinion that I am the new emperor.” And so the Grace of God abandons you and you believe that you are superhuman, without feeling that your feet are “earthy”, the Patriarch pointed out.

“Putin is a Christian, we know each other personally. I know he values me very much. Before the ecclesiastical issues were created, when the Russian church intruded our poor, missionary church, we had met many times. Because I speak Russian, we could exchange views. And in Cairo, we met and talked for an hour and a half. I know he has piety for the Church, for Orthodoxy. But all of this has disappeared and there is only interest and boldness in these people ahead that will not come to a good end. You cannot say that you love God and kill people,” Patriarch Theodore stressed.

As he said, he was waiting for the invasion of Putin in Ukraine, because he always excels “the power of the possible”. “When you are very strong you get drunk on power, it makes you forget that you are human and that ultimately, all one gets is an inch of dirt and a piece of cloth to depart for the “journey”,” the Patriarch clarified.

He made it clear that the Patriarchate of Alexandria immediately condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine. “We had the other bad experience of the ecclesiastical intrusion of the Russian Church in the Patriarchate of Alexandria and even in the poor African parishes. To these poor people came to sow their familiar “weeds” and

make a cowardly ecclesiastical intrusion, in a place where for 2,000 years we have been fighting with so much humility and poverty, to help hundreds of thousands of people in immense Africa," the Patriarch explained.

He recalled that he lived for 10 years in Ukraine, Odessa, from 1985 to 1995. "I learned their language, I studied there, I represented the Patriarchate and I know them so well and I love them so much. That's why my pain is double. How many times did I go from Odessa to Kharkiv and Kyiv? And because I know well what beautiful people they are, what beautiful feelings they have in them, I condemned from the first moment the war between two like-minded peoples. Both the Russian people and the Ukrainian people are Orthodox. It is sad when the interests of the great, the oligarchs, have brought so many thousands of people into this situation, especially the frightened little children's eyes. And the neighborhoods that I walked, that I met, that I loved, and maybe many of them don't live now," he said.

Asked about the Ukrainian resistance, the Patriarch of Alexandria said that they are a very brave people. "The history of the Ukrainian people during World War II was terrible. They are a very heroic people, with a great hug of love that never hurts anyone. They're trying to survive. I then experienced the great change from the Soviet Union to Russia, the great poverty, the hunger that we went through for 2-3 years. And yet they are proud, decent people, they will never show you poverty. They are patriots and they will defend their homeland even if the last Ukrainian has to give all his blood," the Patriarch said.

He spoke of "a dead end on both sides", which "will see that a World War III is not in humanity's interest. We will have a new worst Cold War and it will be very difficult and thousands of people will pay for it".

He made particular reference to the refugee drama, recalling that there are many refugees from Africa who are trying to cross to Europe, from Libya, and to whom he is trying to emphasize in his sermons, that "where they are going to cross the sea, the Libyan, the Mediterranean, they will not find paradise", in an attempt to convince them to stay in their place.

Asked how the Patriarchate can help the Ukrainians, Patriarch Theodore said that he communicates with many people and does what he can. "I will meet with many leaders of Africa, the continent of the future to which many do not pay attention, but it is a sleeping giant that will wake up and one day the center of the world will be Africa. We are of course a poor Patriarchate, we do not have much potential, but we have already sent small humanitarian aid for the people I lived with," the Patriarch said. According to him, there is an attempt to ship containers of food,

medicine to Ukraine, with many of the items that had been sent as humanitarian aid to Africa.

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