29/03/2022

Episcopal Assembly of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia



The 13th Meeting of the Bishops of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia is taking place in Sydney, on 28 and 29 March, under the chairmanship of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia. After the first day's deliberations, we announce to the gracious clergy and Christ-loving people of the Fifth Continent the following:

With pain of soul and great distress we observe the events unfolding in Ukraine and pray for the souls of our Ukrainian and Russian brethren, who have lost their lives in the unjust war that continues to this day in the blessed land of Ukraine. We ask our clergy and people here in Oceania to pray for an end to the war, while we call on those responsible to assume their responsibilities before God and history and to immediately stop the war. In particular, we respectfully call on His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow to mediate, so that the war between Orthodox peoples ends. Until recently, His Holiness hastened to send messages of sympathy to leaders and peoples on the occasion of natural disasters, catastrophes, military

conflicts and other matters of social misery, but now he remains provocatively silent in the face of this tragedy that has shaken our entire planet. The lives of leaders are judged by history and we will certainly not be judged only for what we did but also for what we could have done and did not do.

For Orthodox theology, no war is blessed or justified except for when it is in defence. To support the disputable theory of a “just war”, some have come up with the argument that Ukraine is a state with a history of only 30 years, but this position serves the interests of Russian expansionism and unequivocally falsifies history. The proud Ukrainian people have been fighting for their political and ecclesiastical independence for centuries. As early as 1710, the well-known military commander Pylyp Orlyk drafted the first Ukrainian Constitution, which aspired to be the fundamental law for the independent state of Ukraine. This clearly means that it is easy for the invaders to conquer the cities but it is impossible to hold them. As long as there is a Ukrainian people, it will not stop fighting for its freedom, just as all the peoples of the world fought for their own territorial independence and the right to live freely in a state governed by the rule of law.

Beyond our prayers and moral support for our Ukrainian brethren, we are also endeavouring to be practically by their side. For this reason – and among other things – we are offering 30 scholarships to children of Ukrainian immigrants, as a priority, to study in the schools of the Holy Archdiocese of Australia. Finally, we beseech the God of peace to enlighten those in position of authority to stop the weapons of war and for Ukraine to celebrate a resurrection before the glorious Resurrection of our Lord.