10/05/2022

Address by His Eminence Metropolitan Cleopas of Sweden at the Solidarity Concert for the People of Ukraine



Reverend Fathers,
Your Excellency Madam Ambassador of Greece to Norway Anna Korka,
Honorable Representative of the Ukrainian Embassy in Oslo Ms. Liliya Honcharevych,
Members of the Ukrainian Community of Oslo Ms. Iryna Sabor, Ms. Ira Oliferuk και Ms. Alina Chornovil,
Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Χριστός Ανέστη – Christ is Risen!
Amidst the joy of the Resurrection and this blessed Paschal period that we are traversing, we have come here tonight to our Metropolitan Church in Oslo to solemnize this solidarity event for the Ukrainian people through our attendance. I have come here to join you so that I may greet you with the Paschal paean “Christ is Risen” and the Lord’s exhortation “Take courage”!
In a recent interview, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew stated that “what is happening in Ukraine is a tragedy. It is a shame that will forever

stigmatize those responsible for it; those who have shown themselves to have no fear of God whatsoever. It is as if Holy Week has not ended for the people of Ukraine, who are undergoing such difficult trials amid the ongoing war; for the mothers on both sides who grieve for their children. And yet, Christ is Risen."

The war in Ukraine has undoubtedly served as a source of pain and sorrow. We have witnessed people dying, children being left to grow up as orphans, victims of ethnic hatred, physical and spiritual anguish, brutality and irrationality, a climate of toxicity and perverse behavior. These are all conditions to which man is led when he turns his back on God and chooses to deify himself.

As we join in the suffering of our embattled fellow men and women, let us renew our hope through the empirical knowledge that the Risen Lord shall be the one Who will heal all these tragic events, that He shall grant the strength to overcome sorrow, and the indisputable promise of eternal life. We are called to share in the pain of those who are suffering, share in the grief of those who are mourning, and share our common spiritual home, the Church, with the refugees, devoid elitism, especially considering that "the others" are in reality our "alter ego".

I am deeply grateful to the Reverend Clergy and Parish Council of our Metropolitan Church for this touching initiative of theirs to organize this solidary concert, in conjunction with the Ukrainian Society of Norway, featuring the FolkeMelodi Choir and our Metropolitan Church's Byzantine Choir, with the proceeds being used to send medicine to Ukraine as relief for our suffering brethren. I would like to once again reiterate to our Ukrainian brethren that all the churches of the Holy Metropolis of Sweden and All Scandinavia are at their disposal, to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and other holy services in their mother tongue, adhering to their rites and preserving their ancestral traditions and customs.

At tonight's event, let us lift up our voices and ensure that they are heard in every direction, emphasizing our opposition to every form of war, violence, and stockpiling of armaments. Today, we make known our grave concern as Christians over the dangerous road down which humanity is being led, but also our burning desire for the prevalence of peace.

Faith combats war by changing the way people behave and leading to the rebirth of humanity. It secures triumphs not through the use of weapons, but through sacrifice, as we see from the example of our Lord and the martyrs of our Church. Let us pray that we may be deemed worthy to be numbered among those mentioned in one of the Beatitudes offered by our Lord in His arch-priestly prayer: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9) Amen!











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