

Hierarch of Greek Church appeals to Local Churches concerning Ukraine



Met. Seraphim of Kythira reminded that new oros and canons, contrary to the spirit and letter of the Holy Ecumenical Councils, open the doors to ecumenism and heresies.

The hierarch of the Orthodox Greek Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Seraphim of Kythira, sent the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches an Easter prayerful letter, the main topic of which was the Ukrainian ecclesiastic issue. The text of the letter of the ruling bishop of the Kythira and Antikythira Metropolis of the Greek Church was published on May 2, 2019, on the official page of the Metropolis, the [UOC DECR](#) reports.

In his letter, the hierarch urged the heads of the Local Orthodox Churches “to think together and work in prayers at this present and critical time when unity in the Holy Spirit, unity of mind and coexistence of all the Holy Churches of God, which constitute the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church due to the situation that did not benefit but aggravates the most serious ecclesiological problem of the method of granting autocephaly to those whom it was granted to in the state of Ukraine.”

He stressed that the seriousness and extreme magnitude of the “thorny Ukrainian canonical and ecclesiological problem” entails terrible canonical problems for the plentitude of Orthodoxy and goes beyond the boundaries of one local ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

“I humbly and zealously think that this big canonical issue, which has arisen and lies in the so-called reinstatement and recognition as the “Autocephalous Ukrainian Church” of two existing schismatic groups, which constitute a significant minority of Christ’s plentitude (holy clergy and people) of Ukraine, the anti-canonical removal of the canonicity from Metropolitan Onuphry of Kiev and All Ukraine, who is recognized by all the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, is unprecedented in the church history (even deeper and more multifaceted than the Melitian schism, which in the end was solved by the ultimate oikonomia at the First Ecumenical Council) and is more complicated and dimensional. In a word, the reinstatement of bishops and clerics as canonical, as well as ordinations performed by the excommunicated, anathematized schismatics, who are apparently deprived of the grace of God and the right to minister as priests, is unthinkable and incompatible with the Divine and Sacred Canons and the canonical right of our Holy Orthodox Church,” wrote Metropolitan Seraphim in his letter.

The hierarch reminded that the newly elected “Primate of the Autocephalous Church of Ukraine” Epiphany received ordination and all three priesthood degrees (deacon, presbyter and bishop) from the former Metropolitan of Kiev Filaret – “de-facto excommunicated, anathematized and schismatic”, which makes the former, according to the Sacred Canons and the Church Tradition, deprived of any sacred degree, “and it is impossible for this accomplished act to be cured retroactively”.

“The Divine Founder of the Holy Orthodox Church, His evangelists, holy apostles, God-bearing fathers and ecumenical mentors passed on through Divine Scripture and Holy Ecumenical and Local Councils of our Orthodox Church the Holy Pedalion and All-Orthodox Tradition and Heritage. The conciliar system, acting perfectly through the Divine light and the enlightenment of the Divine and Sacred Canons, regulates all the administrative and spiritual ecclesiastical questions. The Divine Law of the Sacred Canons determines and provides for the boundaries and jurisdictions of each of the Local Holy Churches of God. Going beyond the framework of the Sacred Canons leads to changes of established ecclesiastical jurisdictions from time immemorial, while conciliarly condemned ethnophyletism is always and everywhere considered unacceptable and the one that must be avoided,” the hierarch noted.

Metropolitan Seraphim once again called on the Ecumenical Patriarch and the heads of the Local Orthodox Churches to have a conciliar resolution of the Ukrainian problem, for “only in the Holy Spirit and without interference and pressure can this ecclesiastical issue be resolved”.

“Instead of Easter wishes, let me add my voice to those of all the Holy Local Autocephalous Churches, which until this time have been sensible not to recognize the autocephaly granted to Ukrainian schismatic groups, and using this special occasion, request about a meeting of the Pan-Orthodox Council in order to solve the acute problem of the split Ukrainian people and the current large-scale persecution of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the 21st century with the persecutors partially being the Ukrainian government and the Church of Constantinople. If, for various reasons, the meeting of the Pan-Orthodox Council is difficult to organize, then let each Local Autocephalous Church meet conciliarly, in the Holy Spirit, and hold an unhurried and judicious vote, after which each Primate may present the result and decision of his Church’s Council to the Ecumenical Patriarchate,” the Greek hierarch suggested.

At the end of his message, the Metropolitan of Kythira called upon bishops during these salvific for the whole world days of Easter to fulfill their primary task: “to show the entire modern world a living Orthodox testimony in unity and love of the Risen Lord, our Liberator, God of love, generosity and humanity”.

Metropolitan Seraphim stressed that with this message he calls for the protection of Orthodox ecclesiology, Divine and Sacred canons, the Council system and the canonical order in the Holy Orthodox Church and in the Orthodox Church Tradition and Heritage.

“The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church works out sacred canons and dogmatic oros, but never annuls or changes decisions, dogmatic oros or sacred canons of the Ecumenical and Local Councils, recognized by them. Consequently, when someone designs new dogmatic oros or the newest canons, violating and ignoring the spirit and letter of the true Holy Ecumenical Councils, it opens the doors to ecumenism and any kind of heresy,” the hierarch summed up.

In his Christmas Pastoral Epistle, Metropolitan Seraphim of Kythira called for a pan-Orthodox discussion of the current situation in Ukrainian and world Orthodoxy in order to return to the sacred canonical order.

— Source: [UOJ](#)