

Resolutions of the Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church



The Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which gathered in the Holy Dormition-Kiev Caves Lavra on November 13, 2018, having heard His Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry of Kiev and All Ukraine on the challenges that have arisen recently before the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, adopted the following:

1. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is canonical and recognized by the Local Orthodox Churches, fulfilling its service to God and the people of Ukraine, fundamentally supports the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church is present in all regions of Ukraine and unites both those territories controlled and those not controlled by Ukrainian authorities, experiencing all the joys and sufferings together with its people.
2. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church is endowed with all the rights of independence and self-sufficiency that are necessary today for a fruitful ministry to God and the people of Ukraine.
3. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church has always consistently advocated for the

healing of the schism, for the restoration of Church unity, that is, for a united Church. However, the restoration of the unity of Ukrainian Orthodoxy should not mean the transformation of the Church into an element of politics or propaganda, inasmuch as this contradicts the nature of the Church. We are confident that the overcoming of the Church division should occur without the interference of state, political, and other external forces.

4. The Council of Bishops opposes any attempts to change the name of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is already being declared by top state officials, and other manifestations of discrimination against the faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church at the legislative level. In the event that the relevant draft laws are adopted by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church will defend its rights by every legal means provided by the “Bases of the Social Conception of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church,” Ukrainian legislation, and the European Convention on Human Rights.

5. The Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church considers the decisions of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from October 11, 2018 regarding the Ukrainian Church issue invalid, having no canonical force. In particular, the decision to establish the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople on the territory of Ukraine is the result of a speculative interpretation of Church history. And the decision to remove the anathema and other Church prohibitions from the leaders of the schism and the recognition of the validity of the pseudo-consecrations they celebrated while being in schism is the result of a distorted interpretation of Orthodox canons. The history of the Orthodox Church knows no instances of overcoming a schism by simply legalizing it. Having made such an anti-canonical decision, having recognized schismatics in their existing orders, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, according to the rules of the Church, itself embarked upon the path of schism. In this regard, the Eucharistic communion of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with the Patriarchate of Constantinople is currently impossible and discontinued.

6. We consider the unlawful interference of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in the internal affairs of another Local Church and the attempts to resolve the Ukrainian Church issue with the participation of the state authorities and schismatics, ignoring the voice of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church, inadmissible. Instead, we regret to note that hundreds of thousands of appeals of the faithful of our Church to Patriarch Bartholomew with a call not to legalize the schism under the pretext of creating autocephaly have gone unheeded.

7. The Council of Bishops notes that the process of granting the so-called Tomos of

autocephaly is artificial, is imposed from without, does not reflect internal Church necessity, will not bring real Church unity, and will deepen the division and strengthen the conflicts among the people of Ukraine. Under such conditions, we consider the participation of the episcopacy, clergy, and laity of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in these processes impossible.

8. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church adheres in principle to the canonical approach to overcoming the Church division. At the base of this approach lies the need for repentance from those who are returning from schism. The doors of the Church are never closed before those who want to be spiritually perfect Orthodox Christians.

9. The Council of Bishops states that the unlawful actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople are leading to a deep Church crisis both in Ukraine and in world Orthodoxy. We pray that the voice of the many-millions strong flock of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church would be heard and that the actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople until now would be rectified.

10. The Council of Bishops calls the Patriarchate of Constantinople to dialogue with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with the fraternal participation of all the Local Orthodox Churches with a view to solve this problem in a conciliar manner.

11. The Council of Bishops entreats the primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church His Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry of Kiev and All Ukraine to appeal to the primates of the Local Orthodox Churches concerning the crisis situation in the Church life of Ukraine as a result of the unlawful interference of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

12. The Council of Bishops calls upon all the children of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to strengthen their prayers, to preserve unity between themselves and loyalty to the holy Church of Christ, and to not fear the possible trials, remembering the words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (Jn. 16:33).