

ARCHBISHOP JOB (GETCHA) OF TELMESSOS: “UKRAINE HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE CANONICAL TERRITORY OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE” (19 September 2018)

QUESTION: Vladyka Job, as is known, the Ecumenical Patriarchate has decided to send their representatives (exarchs) to Ukraine to negotiate with representatives of various Ukrainian Churches regarding the possible granting of autocephaly. However, the Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate took such an extremely critical step, stating that it was an “illegal invasion of the canonical territory” of Moscow, and even declared a cessation of concelebration with the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Would you please comment on the truthfulness of Moscow’s statements? Was the decision of the Ecumenical Patriarchate really unlawful and non-canonical?

ANSWER: I would like to immediately reassure everyone that no “intrusion into foreign canonical territory” had been intended nor had been made. And what’s more, it’s not about creating a split or its legitimization. On the contrary, as the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has repeatedly stated, the Church of Constantinople, as the Mother Church, seeks to find the most optimal canonical ways to cure and overcome the existing ecclesiastical schism in Ukraine. It was for this purpose that the representatives (exarchs) of the Ecumenical Council were appointed to start a dialogue and search for such possible ways. For the state of division that has existed in the Ukrainian Church for almost 30 years is not natural. Thousands of Orthodox parishes and millions of Orthodox believers in Ukraine through this schism all this time are outside the unity with the Universal Orthodox Church, deprived not only of the Eucharistic unity with their Orthodox brethren in faith, but also deprived of the most important thing – salvation in the bosom of the canonical Church. Of course, this cannot cause anything but pain and anxiety in the Mother Church.

All these years, the Church of Constantinople, with pain, watched her daughter, the Ukrainian Church, suffering from internal division. At the Ecumenical Patriarchate, we hoped that this problem would be cured by internal means and forces, constantly praying for this and never praying without forgetting the long-suffering Ukrainian Orthodox people. But the events of the last 30 years, and especially after 2014, clearly testify that the internal forces of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine cannot alone overcome the problem of the schism and unite, as it is hindered by external political factors and influences, in particular, by the neighboring Russian state. And for the latter, apparently, the most important thing is not the promotion of the unification of the Ukrainian Church, but the preservation through the Church of its political influence in Ukraine. Here we see other goals whose achievement requires the use of other means. Probably because of this the Orthodox Church in Russia, under the influence of some political factors, is not able to ensure the unity of the Orthodox faithful of Ukraine, does not seek to dialogue with those who for some reason are outside the canonical church borders, and therefore does not seek to find the best means of the canonical economy for the return of these faithful in the bosom of the

Universal Church. The latest statements of the Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate only confirm the latter. For now, for the sake of their own political ambitions, they went not only to break off from part of the Orthodox flock in Ukraine, but also broke from Universal Orthodoxy. It is very dangerous, sad and unpleasant. This is a non-canonical way, which does not serve to heal the schism, but on the contrary, grows the split and the schism.

We hope that this hasty and non-canonical decision of our Russian brothers will be canceled and that the dialogue will be restored, because it is impossible, as a result of political ambitions, to split and break the Body of Christ. At the same time, in this situation, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as the Mother Church, is more than obliged to be with its Orthodox sons and daughters in Ukraine, who for almost 30 years have been constantly asking them to give them a canonical shelter and to help them overcome the schism. This is her direct canonical duty, as Mother Church. It is precisely this concern for the destiny and salvation of the Ukrainian Orthodox flock that led to the last decisions of the Ecumenical Patriarchate regarding the appointment of its legates (exarchs) to Ukraine, which would help to start an effective dialogue on-site between the various parts of the so far divided Orthodox Church in Ukraine.

For Youth with Cameras and a Good Eye (which is... all of you!)

The Consistory Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry wants to encourage youth and young adults to explore their creative talents and to glorify God through art, with the 3rd Annual Ukrainian Orthodox Church Faith and Photography Contest.

Part of our mission, is to provide youth and college aged young adults the opportunity to become more involved with their faith, while showcasing the

talented and creative youth we have within in our Ukrainian Orthodox Churches. We want our youth to realize that having fun and utilizing creativity can be manifested in a project that shows how they correlate their life with their faith.

Deadline for entries is November 15.



Can you Spot your Priest (from the opening Liturgy of Seminary last Saturday)?



How about here?



From the UOC-USA Website: The Opening Day of Seminary

As everyone gathered in the Three Hierarchs Seminary Chapel, they were overjoyed to see the arrival of His Eminence Metropolitan Antony, who was still wheelchair-bound as he recuperates from a recent automobile accident.

The Divine Liturgy flowed on angels' wings as Metropolitan Antony, Rector of the Seminary, 8 clergy, 4 deacons, and scores of faithful put worldly cares aside and glorified our Lord and Savior. The Reading was from the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 24:34-44), with the Lord assuring His followers that "Heaven and earth will pass away, but, My words will by no means pass away." Very Rev. Anthony Perkins, Seminary Director of Vocations and Distance Learning, pastor of the Protection of the Theotokos Cathedral in Allentown, PA, gave the sermon commenting on the current tribulations attacking the Ukrainian Church. He suggested that everyone go back to the "basics", keep their peace and not respond to evil with evil. We should rededicate ourselves to prayer, finding God's peace and sharing it with the world. During this time, we can justify our responses on Social Media, however, what is it that the moment truly requires of us? As St. Paul reminds us we can eat what we want, however, the standard is not whether it is useful for us, but, whether it is useful for our neighbor. The requirement always is that which will bring the Gospel, the Light of Christ, to the person who is listening or reading our words. We must display patience and love, and not always argue the canons and state historic precedence. We are Christians, grounded on the solid rock of Christ. Nobody can pull us from our joy or peace, unless we allow it. It is for us, to bring those falling in the midst of current chaos back to the salvation found on that solid rock....

Upon the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, His Eminence Metropolitan Antony took a moment to share a few pearls of wisdom with his flock, referencing the day's Epistle Reading – 1 Corinthians 10:23-28, quoting: "Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being; and Galatians 5:22-6:2: "...if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." His Eminence instructed us all to pray for peace, care for one another and do no harm to anyone else. In this time of tribulation, we are called to be the point of peace. He directed us to always think of the other person, their comfort, their needs, before ever thinking of our own interests. We are here to serve, as the Lord served. Vladyka beseeched us all to go forth in peace, and selflessness, and to bear each other's burdens, spread the love of Christ, and not be the point of contention in this world which is already teetering on the brink.

Having shared this deep wisdom with the faithful, His Eminence took a moment to give his blessing to all present...