



PERMANENT CONFERENCE OF UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX BISHOPS BEYOND THE BORDERS OF UKRAINE:

TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF UKRAINIAN INDEPENDENCE

To the Beloved-of-God Pastors, Venerable Monastics, and all the Faithful Children of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the Diaspora and in Ukraine

Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers! Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Christ is Among Us!

We greet our beloved clergy and faithful of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church beyond the borders of Ukraine and all the faithful in Ukraine at the celebration of the twenty-seventh anniversary of Ukraine's declaration of independence from the failed Soviet empire – accomplished without the shed of blood and with great hope in a future of boundless growth and hope.

Throughout these twenty-seven years, however, we have suffered through many challenges that have threatened the continuance of that independence. It has been only the profoundly and massively manifested will of the citizens of the nation that all these threats have been suppressed. It has been an extremely difficult path throughout which hope continues to endure that the growing pains of establishing a democracy based on law will soon force the political processes and adherents to put the people and the nation above all personal agendas and desires for self-enrichment.

When we study the history of other great democracies of the world, we discover that they also endured such processes in developing stable governments, ending corruption, creating truly independent judiciaries and adopting constitutions and a legal systems that guarantees the rights of every single one of their citizens. Ukraine, in addition to working its way through such efforts, faces the continued threats from foreign invasion – whether it be actual physical occupation of territory by armed forces as in Donbas and Crimea or the attempts to control or define the economy, culture, spirituality and even historical truth in the country by even some who present themselves as “friends” of the nation.

Our prayers are that the citizens of Ukraine will continue in diligence to express their will to their government representatives and the nation's leaders. Our abiding belief is that they will be guided by God's providence, not only with regard to the political and social aspects of daily life, but most importantly in the spiritual aspects. We call the faithful of our Holy Ukrainian Orthodox Church to a spiritual renewal and to true unity as an expression of our devotion and gratitude to Almighty God in the Holy Trinity for His abundant blessings upon the Ukrainian Nation. The Church must once again become the moral conscience of the nation, as she always was throughout the glorious era of Kyivan-Rus' before surrounding nations began to conquer and divide the nation and usurp her history.

May God give us the spiritual and moral strength to be His faithful witnesses before the world as recipients of His Grace and abundant Love. Ukraine has been a giant among nations in her devotion to God above all and we must pray that this devotion will raise her up again for that reason alone.

May the Blessing of the Lord be with all of you!

With Archpastoral Blessings,

+YURIJ, Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

+ANTONY, Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora

+JEREMIAH, Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Eparchies of Brazil and South America

+DANIEL, Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Western Europe

+ILARION, Bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

+ANDRIY, Bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada

