

THE UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

by

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ЛІТТЯ ХРЕЩЕННЯ УКРАЇНИ У СВ. ПРАВОСЛАВНУ ВІРУ

MILLENNIUM OF THE BAPTISM OF UKRAINE INTO THE HOLY ORTHODOX FAITH

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КАНАДА

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“Ukrainian Orthodox Church is an integral part of the Universal Orthodox Church because its faith is identical with that of the Universal Orthodox Church” — Metropolitan Ilarion.

In the ninth article of the Declaration of Faith we say: “I believe in One, Holy, Universal and Apostolic Church”, and thus we recognize its innate qualities which determine the inward and outward form of its eternal being. These qualities specifically indicate its character as God’s established Church which unites its faithful with God, and leads them to salvation in Him.

ONE, as a designation, applies to the Orthodox Church because it professes one Founder, one Head, who is Jesus Christ, the Son of God; that it is sustained by One Holy Spirit, and is constituted of One Spiritual Body which exists in separate, integrated parts — Autocephalous Churches, among which is our own Ukrainian Orthodox Church — for a better guidance and spiritual fulfillment of people. Further, it is the One Church in the Christian world that has preserved the teaching of Christ, and continues to preserve, teaching its faithful as Christ and His Apostles taught.

That is why in the essence of its being and in the faith of its adherents there cannot be any divergent tendencies due to influences caused by lay ideologies or individual preferences which are not concordant with the teaching of the Orthodox Church. Its individual members constitute the unified spiritual family which, by its virtues of one faith, one accord, and mutual love in sharing one another’s weaknesses, and by respect to its pastors and archpastors maintains a true course toward expansion and realization of ideals taught and propagated by the Orthodox Church.

The Orthodox Church is *Holy* because it is consecrated by its Holy Founder, our Saviour Jesus Christ — by His suffering and death upon the Cross, by His Word as teacher — and because the Holy Spirit dwells eternally in the Church, which sanctifies all the faithful through the instru-

mentality of Holy Sacraments. The Church's singular aim is to lead all of its people in a spirit of perfection unto God, according to Christ's exhortation: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48), and that, "ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end — everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22), as taught by St. Paul, the Apostle.

"The Church is the holiest of institutions", emphasized Metropolitan Ilarion. For that reason, members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church ought to conduct their lives according to its teaching; to believe in it, to cherish it, to protect it, to hold it in awe, so that it may enable its faithful to attain spiritual perfection for a blessed life on earth and external life in the Kingdom of God.

The third characteristic of the Orthodox Church is its *Sobornist'-Universality*.

It is Soborna-Universal because it is a component part of the Universal Church to which all Orthodox faithful of all times and of all states and peoples on earth proclaim allegiance, and declare themselves as one large family in Christ which is "the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:23). The Orthodox Church is Universal also in the sense that it is guided by the decisions of Universal-Ecumenical Councils-Synods.

In accordance with the doctrines of the Holy Orthodox Church, its Universality obligates us towards a unified acting in Christ's name for the salvation of men and their eternal life, and for the glory of God so, "...that the members should have the same care one for another" since, "and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:25-26).

The Orthodox Church is also *Apostolic*. It is called Apostolic, because its teaching is identical to that of Christ's Apostles whom He sent out to spread the gospel. The Holy Orthodox Church unfailingly promotes this teaching and its enduring transmission, and enshrines the mysteries of the Holy Spirit from the Apostles through the ritual of

confirmation which has been perpetuated by its Hierarchy without interruption.

“Throughout all ages our Ukrainian Orthodox Church has been called Apostolic because it was founded by Apostle Andrew” (Metropolitan Ilarion). Apostolic identification of the Church also recognizes the duty of its members which is manifested by them in emulating the Apostles, and in Mission work — striving to broaden and to strengthen the Orthodox faith within the environment in which we live, and in the whole world.

The One, Holy, Universal and Apostolic — these are the basic attributes of Christ’s Church, attributes reflected in the spiritual life of its faithful to the Glory of God, for their salvation and the salvation of all mankind. “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10).

Translated by William Prociuk