

Odoiporikon

Orthodox Mission in the East

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Together again in Fiji Islands

Catechetical Homily *at the opening of Holy and Great Lent*

† BARTHOLOMEW
BY GOD’S MERCY
ARCHBISHOP OF
CONSTANTINOPLE-NEW ROME
AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH
TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH,
MAY THE GRACE AND PEACE
OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST,
TOGETHER WITH OUR PRAYER, BLESSING
AND FORGIVENESS
BE WITH YOU ALL



Most honorable brothers and blessed children in the Lord,

We glorify the God in Trinity, who has once again guided us as Church to the venerable and blessed period of Holy and Great Lent, the arena of physical and spiritual discipline and ascetic struggle, in order to prepare ourselves in a manner according to Christ and journey in humility to the Holy and Great Week and life-giving Resurrection of the Lord.

Ascetic discipline is of course not only a feature of Holy and Great Lent; nor is it solely a matter of concern and obligation to monastics; nor again is it a result of external influence on the Christian ethos, a foreign element in our devotional life. Asceticism belongs to the core of Christian existence and the life of the Church. It constitutes a calling by Christ to His faithful and a witness of His saving presence in our lives. As believers, we do not address an impersonal or inaccessible God, but the incarnate Word that revealed the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit, the fullness of grace and freedom. In this sense, filled with divine blessings and especially profound experiences, Holy and Great Lent re-

mains a dynamic expression and revelation of the treasure and truth of church life in its entirety.

Nothing in the life of the believer is fragmentary or an end in itself. Life in Christ is holistic and undivided. Repentance, humility, prayer, fasting, good deeds – all of these are intertwined and orient the believer to the Eucharist of the Church, the eschatological mystery of the Kingdom. Ascetic struggles are the beginning, the “narrow gate” that leads us to the Holy of Holies. In our tradition, there is never “asceticism for the sake of asceticism.” Ascetic discipline is always a journey; it is fulfilled when it becomes part of the Church, when it leads us to communion of the Sacred Mysteries, which in turn incorporate us into the movement of the Church toward the Kingdom. Let us remind you of the example of St. Mary of Egypt, who is honored on the Fifth Sunday of Lent. After forty years of harsh ascetic struggle and unceasing prayer, she sought to partake of the Body and Blood of Christ from the hands of St. Zosimas in full knowledge that Holy Communion is the source of life and medicine of immortality. In the same vein, the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church (Crete, 2016),

which described fasting as “a great spiritual feat” and “the expression par excellence of the ascetic ideal of the Orthodox Church,” emphasizes that “the true fast affects the entire life in Christ of the faithful and is crowned by their participation in divine worship, particularly in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist” (The Importance of Fasting and its Observance Today, § 1 and 3).

There is no Orthodox spirituality without participation in the Divine Eucharist, through which as believers we become one body, a communion of persons, the community of life, participants of the “common salvation” in Christ the Savior, who is the “common good.” Therefore, fasting is submission and obedience to the rule of the Church, a communal experience. Holy and Great Lent is an invitation for us to discover the Church as a place and way of sanctification and sanctity, as a foretaste and image of the splendid radiance, of the fullness of life and of the complete joy in the eschatological Kingdom. Experientially and theologically it is impossible for us to comprehend the spirit of Holy and Great Lent if we do not perceive it as a journey toward Pascha. The entire period of fasting preserves the “paschal perception” of life. Gloomy asceticism is a perversion of the Christian experience; it is the ignorance of the imminent grace and future Kingdom; it is life “as if Christ never came,” without expectation of the “resurrection of the dead” and of “life in the age to come.”

This spirit was the experience of the Fast before Pascha in the early Church, where it was a time when the catechumens prepared for Holy Baptism during the Divine Liturgy on the night of Resurrection. Even when, later, the catechetical nature of this period of fasting was replaced by the ethos of repentance, the experience of “repentance” as a “second baptism” was nevertheless preserved and remains as the existential disposition that leads us once more to the paschal eucharistic fullness of ecclesiastical life, to the home of the Father, to the communion of the Holy Spirit. In this case, too, the “lifting of the cross” comprises the way to the ineffable joy of the Resurrection.

Throughout these days, the pious people of Ukraine carry their own weighty Cross, as they

suffer the unspeakable abuses of an unprovoked, irrational and hostile war, which propagates pain and death. Co-suffering with our tested brethren and children, we intensify our supplication to the Lord of mercy and God of peace, unto the immediate cessation of this conflict and the prevalence of justice and peace, which are a foretaste of the redeemed joy of the Kingdom of God.

This selfsame salvific truth of the Orthodox faith, piety and spirituality is also emphasized by the event of the sanctification of the Holy Myrrh, which, by the grace of God, we will officiate at this year during Holy Week at our Sacred Center. This blessed and “divinely efficacious” oil of the “Eucharist of Myrrh” transmits the diverse gifts and manifold charisms of the Holy Spirit through the Sacrament of Chrismation upon the newly-illuminated “heavenly citizen” for strength and participation in the life of the Church – and foremost the communion of the Sacred Mysteries – as well as for the divinely inspired presence in the world and witness of the gift of grace and hope that lies in us. The character of the Holy Spirit as “force of communion” is also manifested in the way that the Holy Myrrh is prepared by boiling ingredients offered by the local Orthodox Churches as well as in the place and time of its blessing within the eucharistic assembly, immediately following the sanctification of the Holy Gifts, but equally in the other church uses of Holy Myrrh, such as the chrismation of heterodox and lapsed entering the Orthodox Church, the consecration of churches and holy altars, antimensions, and so forth.

With these sentiments, as we pray that the arena of fasting will prove smooth and our journey toward the Lord’s Pascha will be unimpeded, we invoke upon you – our most honorable brothers in Christ and beloved children of the Mother Church of Constantinople throughout the world – the life-giving grace and great mercy of Christ our God, who forever blesses the ascetic achievements of His people.

Holy and Great Lent 2022

† BARTHOLOMEW of Constantinople
Your fervent supplicant for all before God

Unbearable pain!

Never did I expect to experience such great pain in my declining years, as I felt with the announcement of the decisions of the Moscow Patriarchate to infiltrate – in a completely shameless way – the African continent, too!

The plans of Panslavism and the idea of the Third Rome have been well known for centuries now, and have been promoted consistently by Russian leaders of any political regime, whether tsarist, communist or democratic. However, seeing them implemented now makes me very disappointed in the Moscow Patriarchate and I feel deeply sorry for my Russian brothers and sisters, whom I have loved so much since I was a child and whom for decades I have served both in my current Province and, previously, in Korea. It was my belief until today that no matter how much current political rulers may exert pressure on the Church in Russia, the Church's leaders would not back down in their commitment to the Faith, and would follow the holy witness of the majority of its pastors under Stalin. In other words, I believed, perhaps naively, that they would not unilaterally delete the Canon Law of the Orthodox Church in order to extend their power.

I think that honest historians, whether ecclesiastical or secular, at the present or tomorrow, will read the reasoning of the Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate stating that: "The Holy Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate declared it impossible to refuse further to the clergy of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, who applied for membership in the Patriarchate of Moscow" and therefore "decided to create a Patriarchal Exarchate in Africa under the title Klinsky", and will have no doubt that the rulers of the Moscow Patriarchate have ceased to think ecclesiastically and have become, tragically but unsurprisingly, part of the expansionist Russian policy. They will ask: Since when does the Church obey the requests of some clergy of another jurisdiction (if this is not a false pretext for the naive) and proceed to create irregular ecclesiastical structures? If this was the tradition of the Church, then we would have a number of similar illegal acts, because there are always some clergymen who, for their own personal reasons ask for irrational things.

In the nearly half a century that I have been in Korea and in recent years in Pisidia, I have received many similar "requests" from clergy and

laity, dissatisfied with the Moscow Patriarchate, which I never fulfilled, but instead always advised those making them to remain obedient to their ecclesiastical authority.

The ancient and historic Patriarchate of Alexandria, founded by the apostle Mark, has given birth in Christ to the thousands of today's Orthodox Africans. Who would abandon such a fountain of divine grace and rich spiritual legacy? Without knowing how true the information is about the "requests" of 102 African clergy from eight African countries to join the Moscow Patriarchate, and also without knowing any of the "daredevils" personally I can assure from my experience that not one of them will be a serious clergyman with an ecclesiastical mindset and ethos, but he will instead be an opportunist and self-seeker of the worst kind. Just as some Asian priests in the past joined ROCOR because they wanted to be independent of their regular Diocese and were enchanted by the Russian hierarchical mitre.

After this great impropriety of the Moscow Patriarchate against the Patriarchate of Alexandria, but also after all the illegal and irregular actions it has done and is still doing to its Mother and Provider, that is, to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople—even within the centuries-old Headquarters in Constantinople!—the coup against the Patriarchate of Alexandria was, for the logic of the Muscovites, simply the "natural" continuation of all their illegal decisions that were launched long before their illegal actions. And now let us wait to see the same thing happen in the Autocephalous Churches of Cyprus, and Greece, and elsewhere!

Let those who voluntarily or involuntarily support the illegal actions of the Moscow Patriarchate wake up and understand what evil the Orthodox Church will find itself in if it continues using the tactics of the Protestant Reformation to establish Russian sects wherever they want. Let all those responsible for this tragic calamity think about the great evil that will be done in the sacred cause of the evangelization of our African brothers and sisters, and how much the devil will rejoice.

Maybe the time has come for the Orthodox Church to decide synodically on the issue, as it did in 1872 condemning such rampant ethnocentrism and ecclesiological self-destruction?

† Soterios Metropolitan of Pisidia

The 18th Clergy-Laity Conference of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea

The 18th Clergy-Laity Conference of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea was held again online due to the pandemic on Sunday, January 23, 2022. During his opening speech, the Metropolitan of Korea noted the following:

My beloved Brothers and Sisters,

We are holding the 18th Clergy-Laity Congress of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea, unfortunately in the midst of the pandemic problem. And in a state of great anxiety of the global community for the new mutation of the "Omikron" virus, which tests the patience and endurance of people.

The "Omikron" variant comes to emphatically recall what scientists have been stressing since the beginning of the pandemic. The pandemic is not, they say, going to end if the coronavirus vaccine is not made available in all countries around the world. As long as the poorest countries do not have access to vaccines and medicines, the virus will circulate and change, thus undermining the vaccination programmes of developed economies.

The difficult situation we have been facing for the last two years due to the pandemic is a challenge to all of us as Christians and a call to manifest in practice the great Christian virtue of charity to those in need. For this reason, we have adopted as the theme of this year's Conference, which the ineffable Charity of God has given us, Paul's dictum: "Be devoted to one another in love. (Rom. 12:10) By this, the apostle Paul urges us to become affectionate to others. Just as parents express tenderness and affection to their children quite spontaneously, in the same way each of us must show love for all indiscriminately, "not reluctantly or under compulsion" (2 Cor. 9:7), but spontaneously and cordially.

Christ, the unique model of Charity

A unique and unrepeatable example of Charity is our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we saw in his Incarnation and Epiphany during the Holy Twelve Days, which we were fortunate again this year to celebrate. The infinite Love and the great Charity of God for the salvation of the world brought Him down to earth. God became Man to save man as a Philanthropist. God's Incarnate Word found us "fallen into sin" and resurrected us, lifting us up, as

the good Shepherd, on His divine shoulders. God became man "out of charity" and taught us by His divine example:

To become philanthropists too;

To care for our neighbour, as well as for ourselves;

To prefer salvation of the other more than our personal one;

To let our hearts become a manger in which everyone in need rests;

"No one should seek their own good, but the good of others."

The Saints imitated the Benevolent Christ

"When our Saviour God revealed his charity and love for men" (Tit. 3:4) God's friends, that is, the Saints, with godly zeal imitated him in charity. For this reason "none of the Saints sought his own, but each cared for the interest of his neighbour. That's why they shone more", says St. John Chrysostomos.

The Saints' imitation of Christ proves that charity has no limits, because "the ocean, although is great, it has limits, while the charity of God is unlimited". And the holy Chrysostom adds: "Nothing else is such an important characteristic for the believer and the one who loves Christ, as to take care of his fellow man and make every effort for his salvation." The Saints were ready to even give their lives in order to save the world. "What my heart says is to take the knife, cut my heart into pieces, distribute it to the world and then die", said our modern Saint Paisios of Mount Athos.

Imitating the Benevolent Christ

If we try to imitate God's charity, just as the Saints did, there will be, for example, no people without medicines and vaccines against the pandemic in poor countries. And there will be no privileged and miserable people in the world. For our love and charity will meet all the spiritual and material needs of our brethren, around the world. Thus, our selfless charity and offering to our fellowmen will flood our hearts with true joy and we will gain our salvation. Saint Gregory the Theologian, in his famous speech On Poverty, urges Christians to practice charity with the following words: "... Let us gain our souls with charities, let us give from our belongings to the poor, so that we may become rich in heavenly



“형제의 사랑으로 서로 사

“Be kindly affectionate to one another

goodness." And then he urges each of us, "Become god for the unfortunate by imitating the charity of God. The holy Chrysostom says that "charity is of such great value that it makes the benevolent man "priest", certainly not in the sense of the sacramental priesthood, but of the general priesthood: "Make your house a church. Make your safe, charity box. Become guardian of sacred money, a self-appointed savior of the poor. Charity gives you a kind of priesthood."

What can I do?

Perhaps someone will ask: "What can I do to address the injustice that is happening in our time, with the lack, for example, of vaccines and medicines in poor countries? With poverty, which plagues the so-called third world countries and millions of children are dying of hunger or helplessness from disease? This is a matter of the political will for the governments of the rich countries."

At a first glance this reasoning seems correct, but it is not. And it's not right because we all have a responsibility for everything that happens around us. If, for example, someone from our family would not be able to get vaccinated for one or another reason, would we leave him to his own fate? Would we not make sure that he is vaccinated so that in our house there is no one unvaccinated, thus risking the health of all other members? If a relative of ours was hungry wouldn't we offer him food? If a very dear friend of ours were homeless wouldn't we host him in our house?

If we think about it we will understand that the same thing happens with our global family. Today, during the pandemic, we are living in the most emphatic way the impact that the problem of one country has on the rest of the world. We are a family; we are a neighbourhood. And if we don't care about the fire that our neighbour's house has caught, ours will surely burn, too.

Animal lovers rather than philanthropists?

Today our society unfortunately has become more animal-loving than humanitarian. More and more people prefer to have pets in their home rather than children! Surely no one is saying that we should not show affection and care for animals and to all of God's creations. But, as St. Gregory the Theologian wonders: "How much charity should we show to our equal people, when even in horses we ought to be merciful"? And St. John Chrysostom says on the same subject: "Such-and-such feeds dogs. The other feeds donkeys and bulls, while ignoring people, seeing them melt from hunger... The other wastes a lot of money on luxurious buildings, on buying houses and fields... If you want to be reconciled to the Lord, show good deeds, know how much the poor suffer, care for the naked, for the hungry, for the wronged. God has prepared myriad paths of charity for you."

Charity is not only the material offering

With these words, St. Chrysostom answers the question that probably many have, who live in countries such as ours, in which there is no great problem of poverty and lack of basic necessity materials. Many people think that charity is only to give charity to a poor person. But, as the Holy Father explained, charity has many paths. For in addition to material charity, there is a need for spiritual charity everywhere. There may not be poor and homeless people where you live, but there are certainly many who suffer from the lack of love, affection, understanding, companionship and other related spiritual goods.

In our days, for example, many of our fellow men are mentally tired from the suffering of the pandemic. Others have contracted the coronavirus and are suffering without their relatives next to them in hospitals or have suffered the discomfort of quarantine; others have lost their loved ones; many face financial and psychological problems. We must

랑하십시오.”(로마서12:10)

with brotherly love" (Romans12:10)



stand by them with compassion, to relieve them with our affectionate behaviour; to ease their pain; to become the good Samaritans. In other words, we must imitate Christ, who invites all of us close to Him by telling us, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Mt. 11: 28)

In our time, there is certainly great spiritual hunger and thirst. There are, for example, fellow men who did not hear about the redemptive message of Christ and did not taste the joy of His benevolent presence. The debt of Christian love and charity invites us to become evangelists of the Orthodox testimony to those who ignore the great treasure of our faith.

The conclusion that emerges from the above mentioned thoughts is that indifference to the material or spiritual needs of our neighbour is a mortal sin that cuts us off from the Body of Christ. On the subject of indifference to the pain of others, St. Chrysostom says: "Never say that it is impossible for me to help my fellow men. If you are a Christian, impossible is the opposite, i.e. indifference. Just as in nature there are so many things indisputable, same is here. Within the nature of the Christian lies love and concern for one's neighbour. If you claim something different, then you are insulting God Himself who has arranged things in this way. If you say, for example, that the sun cannot shine, you are insulting God. If you say that a Christian cannot help others, then again you are insulting God and calling him a liar. For it is easier to say that the sun does not warm and shine, than to say that the Christian cannot shine and warm. It is easier to say that light is dark than to say that the true Christian is not light. So don't say it's impossible to help others. The opposite is impossible for Christians."

Charity to our fellow man has Christ as its recipient

And of course, whatever we offer to any fellow

man, will be offered with the deep conviction that the recipient is Christ Himself, who was incarnated for our salvation. Therefore, following the exhortation of St. Gregory the Theologian:

"...Let us visit Christ,
Let us take care of Christ,
Let us feed Christ,
Let us clothe Christ,
Let us help to accommodate Christ,
Let us honour Christ...
Let us offer our charity to Christ through those in need."

Christ does not expect us to offer Him something of what we have and can give to Him through our distressed fellowmen, but to lend it to Him because "he who lends to the poor, lends God." (Par. 19:17) And He will return it to us "a hundredfold" (Mt.19:29) both in this life and in eternity.

Let us become philanthropic and affectionate

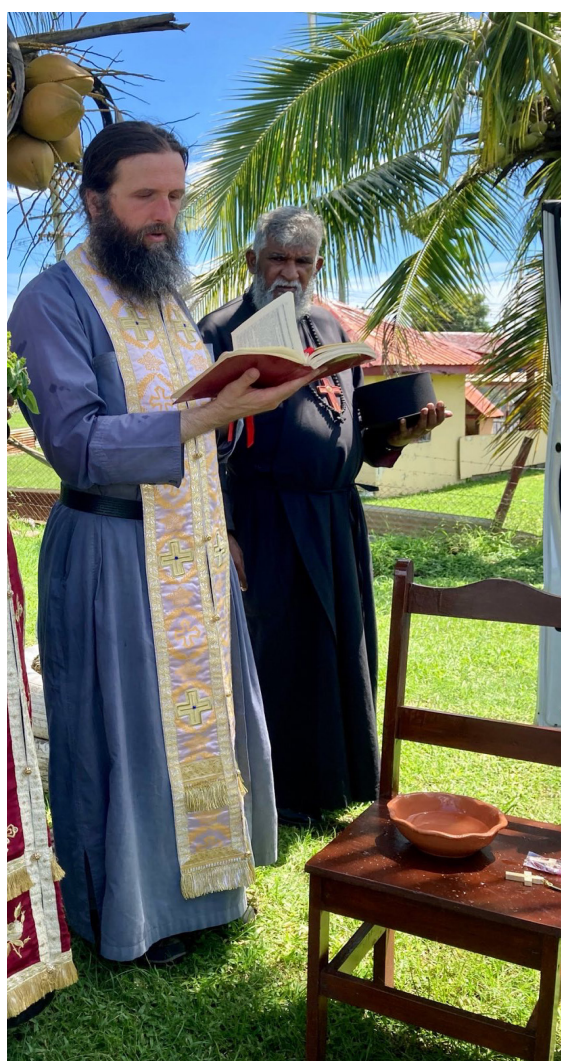
So let us try to become more philanthropic and affectionate this year. Parents with their personal example teach their children how to become philanthropists to their fellow men. Because, like all things, charity begins at home.

Let us become, through our prayer, but also through our practical voluntary service, the consolation to the sorrowful and desperate; helping the mentally and physically ill; supporting the economically and socially weak; in short, let us be "neighbors" to our neighbors.

This way we will be like our Philanthropist Lord. So we will be the "light" of the world and the "salt" of the earth, as He wants us to be. Benevolent action or, as it is called today, selfless volunteering is light. Light, as Christ wants us Christians to be in the world. (Mt. 5:14) Light, which reveals to men the source of light, that is, Christ, who is the true Light. (Jn. 8:12) By volunteering, "our light will shine before others" (Mt. 5:16) and thus become the reason for our fellowmen to glorify God. Amen.



The 5 newly baptized in the Parish of St. Athanasios with Fr. Barnabas



Blessing of two new cars

Back to the Fiji islands

By the grace of the merciful and benevolent God, we are slowly preparing to emerge from the stranglehold of the restrictive measures that the pandemic around the world has forced governments to take, in order to protect the health of the people.

At last the borders of New Zealand opened and Fr. Meletios, Abbot of the Monastery of the Archangels in Levin, was given the opportunity to go to the Fiji islands and meet up close with our beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, after exactly 2 years of isolation. The emotion is great and the tears of joy many.

Together the good man of God, whose heart is full of missionary zeal, i.e. Michael with his wife Meghan and all four children arrived from Alaska to Fiji to offer their services for 2 years mainly in the Orphanage of St. Tavitha, but also in the parishes of the Holy Trinity in Nadi and St. Athanasius in Lampasa. Michael is a good craftsman and Meghan a good teacher. God may give them

strength. I beg you my brethren to have them in your prayers. The conditions of these two years have been catalytic. Many deficiencies, many failures, many malfunctions are waiting for the time to be treated.

The replacement of the two vans for transportation of the children of the orphanage and the parishioners of St. Athanasius was deemed essential and was carried out with the contributions of good Christians from Australia. Soon the purchase of a third car will take place to serve the Monastery of the Assumption.

The repair of the roof of the missionary centre in Sabetto, Vitti Levos, is one of the immediate priorities since the lack of maintenance for three years has made it dangerous for the safety of the building and the inability to protect from the rain.

Repairs to the common areas of the church of Agios Athanasios in Lampasa are being made immediately in order to make it safe to serve the parishioners.

But most important of all is that, face-to-face communication with our brethren is restored; it is the joy and smile we see on their faces; it is the trust when they deposit their lives on the confessor's stole. Converts baptized during the pandemic will be able to have a normal spiritual life. Everyone will be able to rejoice and experience the presence of our Lord.

My dear brethren, we hope and wish, that the difficulties due to the pandemic will become a memory, but at the same time a lesson for all of us. To understand that the power we consider to have as humans is limited and that we are literally in God's hands. Let His name be blessed and let His will be done.

Enjoy the rest of Great Lent.

† Metropolitan Myron of New Zealand



Sunrise in Fiji

Prayer Ceremony for Peace in Ukraine

On Friday, March 4, 2022, Metropolitan Ambrosios of Korea, along with Fr. Roman Kavchak and his family, Fr. Antonios Lim and Deacon Johan Park, participated in the NCKK event at the Seoul Anglican Church for Peace in Ukraine.

At the event, the Metropolitan of Korea was the keynote speaker, during which he delivered the following speech:

My dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

Many words are not appropriate at a time when the fratricidal war continues in Ukraine. Words must give way to Prayer and Action. Therefore, after thanking you for the honor of being the keynote speaker at today's event, I will limit myself to mentioning to your love only a few simple thoughts.

After the recent attack by Russia on Ukraine, an independent and sovereign state of Europe, as well as the violation of human rights and the brutal violence against our fellow human beings, and above all on civilians, we are all shocked and very worried, because no one knows the outcome of the war in Ukraine, and the impact it will have on the world community.

The war in Ukraine is the biggest conflict in Europe since World War II, in 80 years. A war that tends to take on uncontrollable proportions, as Russia has put on the table – albeit to serve largely rhetorical purposes – the “paper” of nuclear weapons. So we are not just talking about a possible world war, but about a possible nuclear war, which will be the ultimate destruction of humanity.

Korea has a bitter experience and still fresh memories from the invasion of our country by enemy forces, led by the same invader as the one that has now invaded Ukraine. It has been 70 years since then and we are still living the tragic consequences of the war on the Korean Peninsula. That is why all Christians in Korea must unite to condemn the war in Ukraine, because “there is no greater sin than war” (St. Sophronius of Essex). In the war against Ukraine, the word of the brother of the Lord apostle James is confirmed once again, who tells us with absolute clarity: “Where do the wars come from and where do the disagreements between you come from? Do not they come from your passions that fight within you? (James 4: 1) Also the St. John Chrysostom from the 4th century declares in an absolute way that: “the cause of the war is the love for money, power and glory”. Therefore every war is: «a consequence of evil and sin in the world... The only war allowed...

as the least evil is the defensive war, or under certain conditions, the war for liberation. The Church tolerates war as an inevitable, tragic necessity for the protection of the innocent and justice. In these cases, the Church provides spiritual healing from the harmful effects of war.» (Holy and Great Synod of the Orthodox Church, 2016)

In this difficult time that we live in, and that will bring great changes to humanity as brought about by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and Covid-19, we cannot remain inactive as individuals, but also as ecclesiastical communities, or keep neutral attitude. Because neutrality means guilty and sinful concealment of injustice against the wronged.

Let me remind you that during World War II most Christian Churches out of fear did not strongly condemn Fascism and Nazism. The United States did the same. They showed dangerous neutrality and tried not to get involved in the European war. But history has taught us that neutrality never helps to bring about world peace. And today, in order to be safe, the modern world must have alliances that will protect peace and justice in the world.

That is why His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew from the very first moment unequivocally condemned the war in Ukraine, saying that “we are all called to pray fervently and wholeheartedly for the maintenance of peace in Ukraine.” As he stressed in the present adverse circumstances, “we direct our prayers to the Lord Jesus, the Lord of peace, asking Him with fervent soul, «to give power of his people” and “to bless His people in peace” (Ps. 29, 11).

And then the Ecumenical Patriarch added:

“Indeed, in the last twenty-four hours a tragic humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding in Ukraine. A war which, like any war, is an abominable and condemnable state. It is the domination of irrationality over reason, hatred over love, darkness over light, death over life. We call for an ending of the war now! We ask to stop immediately any act of violence, anything that spreads pain and death. Let reason prevail, love for fellow human beings, reconciliation and solidarity, the light of the Risen Christ, the gift of life.”

Finally, the Ecumenical Patriarch called on “the leaders of all states, European institutions and



international organizations to work for the peaceful settlement of this critical situation through honest dialogue, which is the only means of resolving any problem and resolving any dispute.”

My dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, as Christians, advocates of love and peace between peoples and cultures, as the Holy Gospel teaches us, we condemn with all our might every war, because it causes death and destruction. It is our sacred duty to fight in every way against injustice, violence and war.

Condemnation of the war in Ukraine by all Christian Churches around the world is the first real responsibility of all of us. It is absolutely forbidden for us not to express dynamically our opposition for a matter which is against the will of God.

These days not only politicians, but unfortunately also some Church leaders do not dare to say things in their own name, so as not to go against Russian politics. Thus, instead of “Russian attack on Ukraine” or the word “war” they use expressions such as “current events” or “difficult situations”.

But we must always remember that: **“Those who do not directly declare that the violation of borders and the attack of one state against another is called an invasion, rest assured that they do not understand the meaning of other words, such as philanthropy, coexistence, man, fellow human beings. Those who do not condemn the invasion of one country lose the moral right to refer to city and culture, international law and world peace, universal brotherhood and universal cooperation...”**

Those who remain silent because this is what their individual interests dictate, let them not talk again about the duty of service to the homeland and the responsibility of service to the universe. Those who do not realize that history should cultivate the memory of unifying persons and connecting ideas, but instead they admire those who work with inhumanity, let

them not be upset when one morning they discover that the world has been turned into Auschwitz.

Those who think that they can be waterproof spectators in the arena of self-destruction of others, let them not be surprised when they feel in their own body the pain of the wounds of humanity. Those who do not feel “responsible for everyone and everything”, who do not understand that everything is like the ocean, everything flows and communicates, e.g. you touch a point here and your move is reflected in the other end of the world”, let them not complain when the time comes for them to be overthrown by every aspiring and paranoid helmsman of history.

Those who admire themselves as spiritual people, thinkers and intellectuals, but keep silent as a fish, let them admit that they are the greatest materialists, since for the sake of false motives they refuse to speak in favor of the weak...

Those who are afraid to die out of love for freedom they will remain slaves forever. Those who are afraid to live as free people, actually they have never lived.” (Stavros S. Fotiou, Founding Member of the Cyprus Academy, Professor at the University of Cyprus)

The conclusion from what has been said is that the condemnation of the war in Ukraine on the one hand and the support in every possible way to the Ukrainian people suffering from the consequences of the war on the other, is what our Christian identity requires us to do immediately. Our Christian duty for the defense of the weak is one way. Only in this way will we be entitled to call ourselves Christians and hope that evil will not knock on our door tomorrow. Only in this way will we be entitled to be called sons of God, since “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God” (Mt. 5: 9).

“Peace be with you all in Christ Jesus.” Amen”. (1 Pet. 5:14)

Thank you very much for your attention.



Whoever shoots the image of God, shoots Christ himself

On Monday, March 14, 2022, at a Press Conference held at the NCKK headquarters on the war in Ukraine, Metropolitan Ambrose of Korea made the following statement before more than fifty journalists from various Korean media:

We have been watching with great mental pain for 19 days the Russian government committing a major crime against the Ukrainian people, similar to what Hitler committed during World War II.

As Orthodox Christians we feel very ashamed because Orthodox are fighting against Orthodox citizens. As the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea, we unequivocally condemn the war against Ukraine, because this war, like any war, is against the will of the God of Love and Peace. We firmly believe that there is no greater sin than war.

That is why we call on the Russian political leadership to immediately cease hostilities against Ukraine, in order to return the wounded dove of Peace to the martyred Ukraine.

Also with great respect and Christian love we ask His Beatitude Patriarch of Moscow Cyril to publicly condemn the war and the crimes committed these days against our Orthodox Ukrainian brothers. We also ask Him to raise his voice and say with prophetic parsimony to every official: First, that the divine gift of freedom for the majority of His compatriots, that is, the Russian people, who are silenced because they oppose the war, must not be abolished; and second, it is not per-

missible for the people of Ukraine to be crucified for any reason because they want to live freely in their homeland.

Anyone who does not protest in any way he can, watching innocent people with children being killed, hospitals being bombed, millions of Ukrainians, including the sick and the elderly, on the road to exile, citizens living in hunger and thirst in the shelters or in the woods to be saved, he is not entitled to be called a Christian.

The participation of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea in the fundraising campaign to help the civilian population of Ukraine is not politically motivated, but entirely Christian and humanitarian. It stems from our deep conviction that in the face of each of our fellow human beings, who are created in the image of God, and who are currently suffering horribly in Ukraine, Christ himself is suffering. Whoever shoots the image of God, that is, the human face, shoots Christ himself. That is why we feel a sacred obligation to defend the "few" (Matt. 25:40 and 45) brothers of Christ.

We pray and hope that reason, justice and love among the Russian officials will prevail, so that this fratricidal war in Ukraine will end immediately. As HAH the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew characteristically stated yesterday in His Sunday of Orthodoxy message: "The invasion and war in Ukraine must end immediately and a new opportunity for dialogue must be given."

Invaders Seek to Take Away Material, Cultural, Religious and Historical Resources from Ukraine

I am Fr. Roman Kavchak, a Ukrainian Orthodox priest and I live with my family in Korea for the last ten years.

Ukraine is a beautiful and prosperous land located in the heart of Europe. Since time immemorial, this land has been inhabited by people who are hardworking, kind, and have deep faith in God.

Our country has lived by placing importance on trade. So for thousands of years, people of different nationalities and religions have lived in peace in Ukraine, and everyone has understood and respected each other's views.

The hardworking and talented people living in this beautiful and prosperous land have been repeatedly targeted by invaders. These invaders seek to take away not only material resources, but also cultural resources, religion and history.

Ukrainians have always stood up for their country and gave it their last drop of blood to protect it.

We Ukrainians are going through a very difficult time in our history. Because our land has been at war for three weeks now.

Our country is under bombardment on land, sea and sky. Homes, kindergartens, schools, maternity hospitals, hospitals and churches are being bombarded and destroyed.

Currently, Ukrainian women are forced to give birth to children in shelters from bombs. They can't even take the dead to the cemetery. People who used to live in peace are victims of these hostilities, they die and are left next to their homes. The continuing bombardment prevented the victims from being buried in the cemeteries.

We have no other choice but the merciful God. And the Lord hears our prayers and gives us the strength to endure this trial.

The whole world is praying for us now, and we are grateful for their prayers. Among those there are the prayers of many Koreans. Koreans are the ones who still hold in their memories all the horrors of war. So they are the ones who understand us best.

We Christians believe that Armageddon will come upon the world with wars and plagues. And we are probably witnessing this now.

The Lord said that the time of the end would come, but He did not say when. However, it is very beneficial to us that the Lord did not disclose this time and kept it a secret. Because the time of the end of the world will depend on how people behave.

The events of the Apocalypse are like a comet coming close to hit Earth. However, the speed and direction of this comet will depend on the behavior of people.

If people live according to God's commandments, and if people love the Lord and help their neighbors, then the comet's speed will decrease. Therefore, I urge everyone to let us all keep God's commandments.

Please allow me to ask you to help us restore peace to the land of Ukraine so that we may prevent other disasters in the world. Thus we will become children of the Lord and will receive the blessings promised in the Gospel.

Let us remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Blessed are those who work for peace, for they will become sons of God." (Mt. 5:9) Thank you.

Fr. Roman Kavchak



Sunday of Orthodoxy in Korea

This year Sunday of Orthodox was celebrated in all the Parishes of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea with two major problems: the coronavirus pandemic and the anxiety about the outcome of the fratricidal war in Ukraine.

In the Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Seoul, a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated by the Metropolitan of Korea Ambrosios assisted by Rev. Fr. Romanos Kavshak, Rev. Fr. Antonios Lim and Deacon Johan Park.

The Litany of the Holy Icons took place inside the church, due to Covid-19. Before the beginning of the Litany, the Metropolitan mentioned, among others, the following:

“The anniversary of the restoration of the icons is always a joyous event in which we celebrate every year the victory of the truth of Orthodoxy against the heretical iconoclasts.

Unfortunately, however, this year, the joy of this glorious event has been overshadowed

by the mourning about the war in Ukraine. This war is a great shame for us Orthodox because one Orthodox country is fighting against another Orthodox sister country. And it is not only a shame, but most importantly, it is a great sin, because this war, like any war, is contrary to the Holy Gospel we believe in.

That is why we condemn the war without a second thought. I ask you to please participate in the Litany, during which we will offer special petitions for the end of the war and the prevalence of peace in Ukraine, and pray deeply for the dead, the wounded, the refugees, and all our suffering brethren.

And at the same time, let us all take part in the fundraiser, which was started by the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea, to raise money to be sent to Ukraine.

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**Stop the War
in Ukraine!**

Give Peace a Chance!

