



Archbishop Hilarion: It was not the Church who condemned Tolstoy but Tolstoy who condemned the Church

Speaking in the Church and World talk-show, Archbishop Hilarion, when asked about the excommunication of Tolstoy, replied, 'It was not the Church who condemned Tolstoy but Tolstoy who condemned the Church. He condemned and discredited it, humiliated and insulted it in many of his works. For instance, in his *Resurrection*, he gave an utterly blasphemous description of the Divine Liturgy'. According to His Eminence, the writer's works of this kind include the so-called 'translation' of the Gospel. 'Having no knowledge of the Greek language, Tolstoy simply rendered the Gospel, distorting the text consciously by throwing out many importance passages and adding his own blasphemous comments', he said.

Precisely for this reason, the Orthodox Church announced that this man, who had never belonged to it, placed himself outside of the church fold by his blasphemous and sacrilegious utterances. In response to that decision of the Holy Synod, Leo Tolstoy declared, 'I have really repudiated the Church'.

'Tolstoy excommunicated himself and announced it publicly. The Church only had to ascertain the accomplished fact. It is a different matter that before his death he must have felt agony and torments. He set off for the Optina Monastery possibly to make repentance but eventually he did not because his relatives did not let a priest to come to him. As Leo Tolstoy died without repentance, we can only commit his after-death fate to the hands of God and the Lord Himself will judge him', the archbishop said.

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