



Metropolitan of Boryspil and Brovary Anthony: If the Patriarch of Constantinople is Ecumenical not only according to his title, then why is he not elected by the Ecumenical Church?



Commentary by the chancellor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church the metropolitan of Boryspil and Brovary Anthony published on the chancellor's Facebook page at the Public Relations Department of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

I would like first of all to comment on the title 'Ecumenical Patriarch'. Much can be said about the historical origin of this title, about how it was understood in the fifth or sixth century. But what is important to us today is that the Patriarch of Constantinople, if we are to judge by his actions, understands this title too literally as a claim to authority over the Universal Church. It is precisely in this capacity that Patriarch Bartholomew allows himself to interfere in the affairs of the other Local Churches.

Our flock made up of millions of people and we, the bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, have a right to ask: upon what basis are these claims made?

In 2014 the bishops of our Church at the Episcopal Council elected as their Primate the Most Blessed Metropolitan Onuphrius. For this reason, he is for our bishops, clergy and laity our Lord and Father. This is simple and evident.

Then it is quite logical that we should ask why a Patriarch elected by a small number of bishops of another Church on the territory of Turkey (whose government, incidentally, calls him none other than the 'Greek Patriarch of the Phanar in Istanbul') ought to be our Lord and Father?

If 'Ecumenical Patriarch' is something more than one of the pompous titles of the Byzantine era which has long disappeared into history, then why is this very Patriarch not elected by the Universal Church? The Pope, who also lays claim to universal authority within the confines of his church, is nonetheless elected by a conclave of cardinals which represent the Roman Catholic Church. But was Patriarch Bartholomew ever elected by those Churches in whose affairs he actively interferes?

Of course, one may manipulate ancient documents whichever way one wishes, take out of context the canons and quote far-fetched precedents from times long gone by. The fact remains, however, that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is not a fiction but real people. Millions of people who have gotten used to persecution, whom it is difficult to frighten with threats from overseas, who continue to remain loyal to their church hierarchy without regard for those who love "seats of honour and to be greeted with respect" (Lk 11.43) and lay claim to that which they have no right to. And it is inevitable that they will have one day to answer to the opinion of the people of the Church.

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