

Joint Deliberation Between the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad and the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece

Communiqué
from the Joint Deliberation of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox
Church Abroad with the Delegation from the Holy Synod of the
Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece



On Tuesday, April 15/28, 2015, at the headquarters of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad (ROCA) in Odessa, Ukraine, a joint fraternal deliberation was held between the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, under His Eminence, Metropolitan Agafangel, who was present with six other Hierarchs (Andronik, Georgiy, Afanassy, Kirill, Nikon, and Roman), and an official Synodal delegation from the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece (*He Ekklesia G.O.Ch. Hellados*, or the Church of the G.O.C. of Greece), consisting of three Hierarchs (Photios of Marathon, Ambrose of Methone, and Klemes of Gardikion) and a Presbyter (Father Michael Konstantinides), who served as their translator.

The aim of this joint deliberation was to secure the unity of the two Churches by means of dialogue on certain issues of mutual interest, seen by both sides as needing clarification.

In a spirit of peace, mutual respect, and love, the delegations dealt with eight principal issues, achieving unanimity thereupon. To wit:

1. It was decided that the ROCA would refrain from accepting a certain group of clergy, owing to impediments of a canonical nature, which were pointed out by the Greek side. As well, it was agreed that henceforth there should be joint consultations in handling similar instances of petitions

from clergymen located abroad; that is, outside the canonical territories of the two Churches.

2. The delegations agreed that one side would not create parallel ecclesiastical structures in a country in which the other side has been engaged in longstanding activities.

3. The delegations agreed that every possible effort should be made, in common and with discretion, to resolve problems between Sister Churches, but at the same time agreed to avoid interference by one Church in the internal affairs of the other.

4. There was a discussion regarding clergymen who have been urged by the Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece to join the ROCA.

5. The delegations discussed proposals for the temporary canonical submission of ecclesiastical communities and clergy in Western Ukraine to one of the Sister Churches of the ROCA.

6. The ROCA confirmed that it is endeavoring to uphold [preserve] the traditional manner of celebrating the rite of Baptism through three full immersions; it also affirmed that when accepting persons coming from so-called official Orthodox Churches, it examines the form of their Baptisms, canonically correcting, when necessary, any deficiencies therein.

Both sides also confirmed that the Holy Eucharist is to be offered only to members of the Church.

7. There was mutual examination of proposals for resolving problems in Georgia, where both parties maintain parishes.

8. Both parties established that the ROCA has been commemorating Patriarch Irenaios of Jerusalem only in the Holy Land, on the basis of a longstanding tradition of the ROCA, but not as the local ecclesiastical authority. During the last few decades, since the founding of the State of Israel, the ROCA has not been, and is not, in Eucharistic communion with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The Hierarchs of the ROCA are awaiting a clear anti-ecumenical statement/position from Patriarch Irenaios of Jerusalem, so that, on the basis thereof, they might decide whether or not to commemorate him in the future.

The Hierarchs of the ROCA

The Delegation of the Church of the Genuine
Orthodox Christians of Greece

Odessa, April 17/30, 2015