

## Delegation of Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada Discusses With Ecumenical Patriarch Relations With Churches in Ukraine

11 February 2013, 13:01 | Inter-Orthodox relations | 1 |



On 7-10 February, a delegation of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada visited the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, Turkey, in response to the invitation of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I to the head of Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada (UOCC) Metropolitan Yuriy.

A delegation composed three active hierarchs, as well as members of the Consistory of the Church and its standing Inter-Church Relations Committee, arrived in Istanbul on February 7, 2013, to discuss matters of mutual importance regarding the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada and its mission in Canada and in the world, reported the website of [UOCC](http://www.uocc.org).

Metropolitan Yuriy and Bishops Andriy and Ilarion were accompanied by the Chancellor, Rt. Rev. Protopresbyter Victor Lakusta, and the following Consistory Board members approved by the Presidium with His Eminence's blessing: Very Rev. Taras Udod, Victor Hetmanczuk and Dr. Peter Kondra, all members of the Presidium of the Consistory, which was elected at the Sobor of our Church in 2010. Daniel Bilak, a member of our Church who has been working for 20 years in Kyiv, was with them as well. Members of the Inter-Church Relations Committee also attending are: Rt. Rev. Dr. Ihor Kutash (Chair) and Yaroslav Lozowchuk.

The delegation was met at the Airport by the Ukrainian Consul General in Istanbul, Bohdan Yaremenko, and by the Very Reverend Archdeacon of the Patriarchate, Maximos (Veanopoulos) as well as newly-consecrated Metropolitan Athenagoras (Chrysanis) of Kydaniai, the chief librarian, recently in charge of the logistics and order of the Consecration of Holy Myrrh at the Patriarchate at which the Primate, Metropolitan Yuriy, also participated. The Mother Church was also represented by the Rt. Rev. Archimandrite Vissarion (Komzias) who holds the

title of Hierokyrix (Grand Preacher) of the Ecumenical Throne and the Dean of the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George.

On 8 February, the delegation had an audience with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who addressed the members in a speech that showed remarkable sensitivity and care for our Church in Canada. Metropolitan Yuriy gifted him with, among other things, a scale model of the sculpture "Sad Memory of Childhood" (donated by the sculptor, Petro Drozdovsky) which is a monument to the victims of the Holodomor-Genocide (in recognition of its upcoming 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary) which stands before the Holodomor Museum in Kyiv, as well a CD of the poetry of Metropolitan Ilarion (Ohienko) of blessed memory set to music by the creative group in Montreal led by Very Rev. Fr. Volodymyr Kouchnir, a CD of Paschal Matins sung by the Ivano-Frankivsk Cathedral Choir (jointly produced by a member of our Church), decorated candle-sticks by master craftsman Wasyl Stratiychuk of Regina, and a translation into Ukrainian of The Orthodox Way written by Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware). As he accepted the gifts the Patriarch expressed condolences to the Ukrainian nation, repeatedly using the Ukrainian word "Holodomor".

After lunch in the Patriarchal refectory there was a frank meeting and discussion with members of the Patriarchal Committee for Inter-Church Affairs, presided by the renowned theologian, Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon. Other members of this Committee who took part were Metropolitan Meliton (Karras) of Philadelphia, Metropolitan Emmanuel (Adamakis) of France and Archimandrite Bartholomew (Samaras), the Chief Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod and Secretary of the Committee. Metropolitan Sotirios (Athanasoulas), Patriarchal Exarch of Canada, also participated. The members of the delegation emerged from this meeting encouraged and heartened by the exchange of information and responses.

They had dinner at the Sacred Patriarchal and Stavropegian Monastery of Baloukli where the relics of many of the Ecumenical Patriarchs repose. Their gracious host was the Abbot of the Monastery, Metropolitan Gennadios (Limouris) of Sasima. Metropolitan John of Pergamon co-hosted. The discussion and exchange of information and responses as well as potential plans for future cooperation between UOCC and the Mother Church lasted for many hours.

On 9 February, the members of the delegation had the second meeting with the Inter-Orthodox Affairs Committee of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The discussion was particularly centred on the matter of relations with the Churches of Ukraine. They were pleased to note the high level of interest on the part of the Mother Church regarding the land of our forefathers and noted a keen attention on their part to the information and suggestions the delegation was able to provide regarding the importance of elevating the moral authority of the Ecumenical Patriarch among our people in Ukraine and in Canada. Updates were shared regarding the Holy Great Council (which is planned for 2014) and the Episcopal

Assemblies. The exchanges were particularly candid and well-received on both sides.

After lunch in the Patriarchal refectory (dining hall) and coffee in his reception chamber, the Ecumenical Patriarch thanked all the members of the delegation for their concern and love of the Mother Church, as well as their dedication to their Ukrainian Orthodox Church – in Canada and in Ukraine. He and the members of the Inter-Orthodox Affairs Committee emphasized repeatedly the love of the Mother Church for Ukraine and that she would not abandon our people. Gifts were again exchanged between His All-Holiness and the delegation. Metropolitan Yuriy, responded expressing mutual gratitude and appreciation. A Paschal greeting was recorded with His All-Holiness for later broadcasting.

The delegation then left for a visit by boat to Halki, the island which houses a monastery and the famous Theological School, Patriarch Bartholomew's alma mater which has been closed for political reasons since 1971. They were accompanied by Very Rev. Deacon Joachim Billis, the Deputy-Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod, and were most graciously received by the Abbot and Rector of the School (there are hopes of that it will re-open soon), His Eminence, Professor Dr. Elpidophoros (Lambriniadis), Metropolitan of Bursa.

They visited the School, marvelled at the many ancient books in its library and then attended Vespers in the Chapel. There was also a long and most informative exchange with Metropolitan Elpidophoros, who has been much engaged in relations with the Orthodox of Ukraine since before Patriarch Bartholomew's visit there in 2008.