

H.H.B. THE PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM THEOPHILOS AT THE ECCLESIASTICAL MISSION OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

5 June 2017

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Dear Fathers,

Beloved Monastics,

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As we gather to celebrate the great and holy Feast of Pentecost, we recall the words of the hymnographer, who reminds us of the fundamental theological truths of this celebration:

*Of old the tongues were confounded
because of the audacity of building the tower,
but now the tongues are made wise
for the sake of Divine Knowledge...
now the concord of tongues hath been inaugurated
for the salvation of our souls.*

(Plagal of the Fourth Tone)

We are reminded that this Feast of Pentecost is a declaration of the fundamental unity of our ecumenical, pan-Orthodox Church, which has been revealed to us on this Feast in this Holy City. This truth has been guarded and nourished by the Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of the Churches, from the very beginning.

This same unity continues to be made manifest among us, most recently in the Holy and Great Council of the Church in Crete. It was in consonance with the meaning of Pentecost that the Holy and Great Council was opened after the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of Pentecost last year, further embodying the true nature of the Church.

The unity of the Church is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and we are called to cherish and deepen this unity. To fracture this unity is a most grievous matter, and on this occasion we take this opportunity to condemn in the strongest possible terms those who are acting against the parishes of the canonical Orthodox Church of the Ukraine. The Holy Fathers remind us with reason that such fracturing of the unity of the Church in schism is the most serious of sins.

For “Christ hath enlightened the fishermen by the Spirit”, but “condemned the impious because of their offence”. May the Holy Spirit, who descended upon the disciples on this Feast, enlighten our minds and our hearts, and give us the will to guard the precious gift of the unity of the Church that has been entrusted to us by Divine Providence.

Thank you.