



The Holy See

*LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE CARDINAL LUBOMYR HUSAR
MAJOR ARCHBISHOP OF KYIV-HALIČ (UKRAINE)*

*To Cardinal Lubomyr Husar
Major Archbishop of Kyiv-Halyc*

"If anyone thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, "Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water"" (Jn 7: 37-38).

These words of the Lord re-echo in my heart as I think of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, which is preparing to commemorate the sad events that took place in the Cathedral of St George in Lviv at the beginning of March, 60 years ago.

Notwithstanding the persecution, oppression and deprivation of their own Pastors experienced by Ukraine's believers in Christ, brought about by an ideological and inhuman State policy, they remained faithful to the spiritual heritage of Olga and Vladimir when the Baptism that they accepted was made manifest, as the beloved John Paul II wrote in the Apostolic Letter *Euntes in Mundum*, as a "decisive element for the civil and human progress which is so important for the existence and development of every Nation and State" (n. 5, 25 January 1988).

Unfortunately, in those sad days of March 1946, a group of clerics gathered in a Pseudo-Synod who unduly claimed to represent the Church seriously wounded ecclesial unity. Violence was intensified against those who remained faithful to unity with the Bishop of Rome, giving rise to further sufferings and forcing the Church to return underground.

But, although beset by unspeakable trials and sufferings, Divine Providence did not permit the disappearance of a community which for centuries was considered a legitimate and living part of the identity of the Ukrainian People. In this way, the Greek-Catholic Church continued to give its own witness to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ.

The memory of what took place 60 years ago must become an incentive for the community entrusted to the pastoral care of the reorganized Greek-Catholic hierarchy in Ukraine to deepen its profound and earnest bond with the Successor of Peter. From that Church, purified by persecutions, streams of living water flow not only for Ukrainian Catholics but for the entire Catholic Church throughout the world.

In the patient journey of faith lived day after day in communion with the Successors of the Apostles, whose visible unity is guaranteed by the Successor of Peter, the Ukrainian Catholic Community was able to keep sacred Tradition integrally alive. To keep this precious patrimony of the "*Paradosis*" alive in all its richness, it is important to ensure the presence of the two great streams of the one Tradition - the Latin stream and the Eastern one - both with the variety of historical manifestations that Ukraine has duly expressed.

The mission entrusted to the Greek-Catholic Church in full communion with Peter is two-fold: its duty, on the one hand, is to maintain the visibility of the Eastern tradition in the Catholic Church; on the other, to facilitate the meeting of the traditions, witnessing not only to their compatibility but also to their profound unity in diversity.

Venerable Brother, I pray that this anniversary may become, as venerable John Paul II wrote in his Apostolic Letter for the Fourth Centenary of the Union of Brest, "an appeal to the Spirit-Paraclete, that he may cause to flourish everything which promotes unity, and may give courage and strength to all those who commit themselves, according to the guidelines of the Council's Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, to this work blessed by God. It is a plea for the gift of brotherly love, and for the forgiveness of offences and injustices suffered in the course of history" (n. 11).

I join in spirit the action of grace that will be celebrated in the shared awareness of the common mission to obey Christ's command: *Ut unum sint*. I invoke Mary, *Theotokos*, and the many martyrs that adorn the face of your communities, and I cordially impart to you, to the Bishops, priests, consecrated persons and the faithful of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, as a sign of my constant affection and thoughts, a special Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 22 February 2006, Feast of the Chair of St Peter, Apostle

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

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