The Holy See

LETTER OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
TO THE BISHOPS OF THE SYNOD OF THE UKRAINIAN GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH

To the Venerable Brother
His Beatitude Major Archbishop of Kyiv-Halyč
Sviatoslav Shevchuk

Praised be Jesus Christ!

Beatitude,
Dear brother bishops of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church.

I cordially greet all of you gathered in Synod in Przemyśl, from 7 to 15 July. This Synod, according to the previous plan, should have been held in Kyiv, but the dramatic situation of the war, already in its fifth month, did not allow it.

Recently, on 27 June, the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church celebrated the liturgical memory of the Blessed Martyrs, beatified by Saint John Paul II in Lviv during his visit to Ukraine in 2001. But it is at this time that we better understand the circumstances in which these martyrs lived and died, among whom were bishops, priests, religious men and women and lay people who fell victim to the Soviet communist regime. Today, from heaven, they protect their suffering People: to their protection I entrust all the Members of the Synod.

Dear Brother Bishops, I join spiritually in your suffering, assuring you of my prayer and my commitment, which not infrequently, because of the delicate situation, does not emerge in the media. The Synod of Bishops, whose theme is “Synodality and Catholicity: the experience of the UGCC”, must have as its purpose the good of the Church and of the individual faithful, and also be a place of encounter and mutual help on the common path of life, in the search of new ways of accompanying the faithful and being close to them. Once again, I would like to remind you of my words to the Major Archbishop and the Metropolitans at our meeting in Rome in July 2019:

"*The closeness of pastors to the faithful is a channel that is built day by day, and which brings the living water of hope. It is built thus, encounter after encounter, with the priests who know and take to heart the concerns of the people, and the faithful who, through the care they receive, assimilate the proclamation of the Gospel that the pastors transmit. They do not understand if the pastors are intent only on saying God ; they understand if the former make the effort to give God; giving themselves, remaining close, witnesses of the God of hope made flesh to walk the paths of man. May the Church be the place where hope is drawn, where the door is always found open, where consolation and encouragement are received*" (AAS, 7 /2019/, 1126-1127).

May today's meeting inspire you in the creative continuation of the extraordinary tradition of the faith of the Fathers, rooted and supported for generations in the People of God of your nation. I pray that your Church and your people, enlivened by the strength of the Sacraments, keeping their gaze fixed on the Immaculate Heart of Mary, never lose the Christian hope in better times to come.

To all the members of the Synod, I impart my blessing.

Francis

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