

A Theological and Moral Position on the Initiative of Pope Leo XIV to Meet with Metropolitan Antony of the Russian Orthodox Church



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Uzhhorod, July 22, 2025

An Event that Requires Spiritual Evaluation

On July 26, 2025, Pope Leo XIV plans to receive Metropolitan Antony Sevryuk of Volokolamsk, head of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, in a private audience. This initiative is being presented in the media as a gesture from the Vatican aimed at renewing dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), supposedly to ease international tensions amid the full-scale war of aggression waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

However, such an initiative evokes deep spiritual anxiety, moral rejection, and justified indignation—not only among the Ukrainian people but also among faithful Christians around the world who remain loyal to the true Gospel teaching and the truth of Christ.

The ROC — an Instrument of Evil, not the Church of Christ and Not a Partner for Dialogue

The Russian Orthodox Church, headed by Patriarch Kirill Gundayev of Moscow, has long since lost its spiritual essence as part of the Body of Christ. It ceased to be the Church of Christ not only in form but above all in content—having turned into an ideological mouthpiece of the Kremlin and a submissive instrument of the Moscow totalitarian regime. This regime, led by Vladimir Putin—not merely a political aggressor, but a recognized international terrorist and war criminal—uses the ROC as a cover for its crimes and as a tool of spiritual enslavement.

The Russian Orthodox Church:

- blesses military aggression, killings, and the deliberate extermination of the civilian population of Ukraine, sanctifying violence under religious pretexts;
- justifies the genocide of the Ukrainian people by employing religious rhetoric and false historical-theological constructs that have nothing to do with the true ecclesial tradition;
- systematically violates God's Commandments, disguising its complicity in crimes with rhetoric about "church diplomacy" and geopolitical mediation;
- promotes the cult of the "Russian world" (Russkiy mir)—a pseudo-spiritual imperial doctrine that is, in fact, a political heresy of imperialism and not the Gospel teaching of Jesus Christ.

This is not a coincidence but a systemic and consciously chosen participation in evil. Therefore, the Russian Orthodox Church cannot be a genuine religious partner in Christian dialogue. For, as the Apostle Paul writes:

«What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?»

(2 Corinthians 6:15)

(“Belial” — the antithesis of Christ, a symbol of evil, an embodiment of the devil.)

Is “Diplomacy” with Evil Acceptable for the Church?

The true Church of Christ is called to be the voice of Truth and Justice, not a participant in theatrical performances masked as “church diplomacy.” Peace built on lies, deceit, violence, murder, plunder, and hypocrisy is neither the peace of God nor authentic human peace. It is merely an imitation of reconciliation that leads to even greater destruction—spiritual, moral, and ecclesial.

The Pope, as head of the Vatican State and the Pontiff of the Catholic Church, certainly has the right to initiate actions. However, his status as one of the Primates of the Church of Christ does not give him the right to legitimize spiritual falsehood or bless antichristian activity. If the Russian Orthodox Church does not repent, does not distance itself from the aggressor, tyranny, killings, and the crimes committed by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and humanity, then any dialogue with it is deprived of spiritual foundation and perspective. Such dialogue becomes complicity in the crime of silence and a de facto legitimization of evil under the guise of ecclesiastical-diplomatic gestures.

Such “meetings” may represent:

- either a manifestation of dangerous spiritual naivety—which is difficult to believe, considering the historical experience of the Catholic Church and the Vatican;
- or a tool of diplomatic maneuvering for the sake of certain interests—both visible and hidden, sometimes skillfully disguised behind the façade of Vatican statehood;
- or a hypocritical attempt to preserve an outward appearance of peace and spirituality—rather than bearing open witness to Truth and engaging in the struggle for Christ’s Justice.

Christian Morality Versus Compromise with Evil

Our Savior Jesus Christ never called for compromise with evil or tolerance toward the servants of the devil. His Word is a call to fearless witness to the Truth, to fidelity in keeping God's Commandments, and to unwavering adherence to the Gospel—even at the cost of one’s life. The true Church of Christ must choose the side of Truth and Justice—even when it is politically inconvenient, threatens personal safety, contradicts diplomatic interests, or goes against the opinions of states, international institutions, or a deluded public.

Christ clearly states:

«I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.» (Matthew 10:34)

This sword is not for violence, but for the discernment between good and evil, between truth and deception, between holiness and apostasy. It is a sword of spiritual struggle by which Christ separates Light from darkness.

The Church of Christ cannot sit at the same table with those who knowingly and stubbornly bless murderers, rapists, terrorists, and looters—without their sincere and public repentance. For the Church's silence or superficial reconciliation with such people is not an expression of love or refined diplomacy, but a betrayal of the Truth, a pact with falsehood, and complicity in evil.

The Locality of the Church as a Guarantee of Faithfulness to the Nation, the State, and the Truth of Christ

Historical and contemporary experience clearly demonstrates: when the governing center of a Church is located outside the borders of a sovereign national state, such a structure inevitably tends to implement not only spiritual but also political, geocultural, and interstate policies—in the interests of the state in which its highest ecclesiastical authority resides. This applies to both Orthodox and Catholic confessions, regardless of the degree of their declared autonomy or ostensible apoliticality.

This was the case, in particular, with the Moscow Patriarchate, which for centuries pursued a policy in Ukraine of denationalization, Russification, and subordination of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church with its metropolitan center in Kyiv to the Moscow ecclesiastical-state system. Similar patterns can also be found in the activities of the Catholic Church, when the Apostolic See, during various historical periods, cooperated or even formed alliances with political centers that were hostile or colonial in relation to Ukraine—neglecting both the truth of God and the rights of the Ukrainian people.

Today, amid the full-scale war of Russia against Ukraine, these patterns are especially vivid and painful. The Russian Orthodox Church—a de facto spiritual department of the FSB and a key ideologist of the “Russian world” (Russkiy mir)—continues to receive support in the form of “dialogue” not only from certain governments but also from the Catholic Church. The latter, having its own structures in Ukraine (Latin Rite dioceses, the UGCC, and the Mukachevo Greek Catholic Eparchy), at the level of its highest hierarchical leadership—both the current Pope Leo XIV and his predecessors—continues to maintain communication with the Moscow Patriarchate, instead of openly condemning its spiritually criminal activity.

Such conduct, masked by the notion of “church diplomacy,” objectively contradicts not only the national interests of Ukraine, but also the spiritual responsibility before the nations of the world, the moral foundations of the Christian faith, and global security—creating the risk of complicity in evil and contributing to the escalation of a third world war being ignited by Moscow.

In this context, it is especially important that the Local Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine be affirmed and developed on Ukrainian soil—as the true Church of Christ, which:

- is spiritually united with its people in sorrow and in victory;
- is free from geopolitical dependence on any foreign state or ecclesiastical structure;
- serves Christ’s Truth, God’s Law, the good of the Ukrainian people, the State of Ukraine, and the Ukrainian Church;
- resolutely rejects any compromise with the aggressor, as well as with those who justify evil, disregard human life, and violate human dignity.

The Local Church is not only the canonically correct form of ecclesiastical order, but also a moral guarantor of responsible ministry, free from political pressure, fear, opportunistic benefit, and betrayal. This is a Church that lives with the people and for the people, that leads toward salvation in Truth—and not toward false peace and spiritual enslavement.

Therefore, the call to support and strengthen the Orthodox Church of Ukraine is not a political slogan but a profound ecclesiological and national-spiritual necessity. For only such a Church is capable of remaining faithful to Christ, to its people, and to the state—especially in times of trial, struggle, and historical responsibility.

As it is written in the Holy Scripture:

*«Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He has chosen as His heritage!»
(Psalm 33:12)*

Our Christian Witness Today

The Ukrainian people stand in truth—in a struggle for life, freedom, dignity, and for Christian and universal human values. And this struggle is not only for themselves, but also for the peoples of Europe and the entire democratic world—against evil, aggression, and spiritual darkness. Christians in Ukraine do not remain silent. They confess a living faith that is unafraid to name things as they are: evil as evil, falsehood as falsehood, the servants of the devil as the servants of the devil, murderers as murderers, apostates as apostates.

This is the true witness of Christ—not theatrical, not diplomatic, but deep, sincere, and sacrificial.

Today, the world—as well as Ukraine in particular, in the conditions of the full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war (2014–2025)—does not need “humanitarian gestures and handouts” which, in essence, mask a compromise with falsehood, deceit, evil, and crimes—against both individual human beings and all humanity. Such actions only devalue the Truth, Justice, and the living testimony of the Gospel.

What the world and the Church of Christ truly need today is spiritual unity in faith, love, Truth, and Justice, and also in a shared, uncompromising resistance to:

- evil in all its forms;
- crimes against peaceful people and sovereign states;
- the destruction of Local Churches;
- aggression and genocide;
- apostasy —

and to all those who knowingly or deceitfully serve these dark forces, regardless of religious rank, political status, diplomatic disguise, or confessional affiliation.

For no form of “church diplomacy” devoid of service to Truth, Justice, and faithful witness to the Holy Gospel can substitute for the true service to our Heavenly Father in His Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Especially in times when we are facing a spiritual war, in which the fate of peace, nations, the Church of Christ, and God's Truth in this world is being decided.

Afterword

To all Christian Churches—including the Catholic Church—amid the Russian-Ukrainian war, a war which, due to Moscow's actions, poses a real threat of escalating into a full-scale global military conflict, and which already today displays numerous confirmed signs of the partial realization of that threat, it is imperative to bear firm and unambiguous witness to the Truth of Christ, resolutely rejecting all forms of pseudo-peacemaking collaboration with evil. Now is the moment of truth for all who bear the name of Christ and claim spiritual leadership.

The Christian world must proclaim not diplomatic equilibrium, but moral truth. Therefore, a clear and unequivocal testimony must be voiced:

- no dialogue without truth and repentance;
- no legitimization of structures that serve the devil, justify violence and genocide;
- no betrayal of Christ for the sake of political influence, personal gain, or theatrical peacemaking “for appearance’s sake.”

For when dialogue replaces truth, and compromise replaces repentance, this is no longer peacemaking, but a betrayal of the Holy Gospel, a betrayal of Christ Himself, who is «the Way, the Truth, and the Life» (John 14:6).

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