

Address for the Opening Session of the Holy and Great Council by His Beatitude Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



Crete, 20.04.2016.



Your All-Holiness,

Your Holinesses, Eminences, Excellences,

Reverend Brothers Priests, Brothers and Sisters participants of the Holy and Great Council,

God the Almighty, One in the Holy Trinity, has blessed us to gather today, after long hours of work and many preparations, at this beautiful island of sunny Greece – Crete in order to begin, by the solemn Divine Liturgy and invocation of the Holy Spirit, the Holy and Great Council of 2016.

Polish Orthodox Church taking part at this council, led by its head, the bishops, representatives of clergy and lay people, greets the Holy Council with the words: “Christ is in our midst, He is and He will be”. Peace be unto all!

We give thanks to Christ, the Head of the Holy Church, for today’s day “that He created for us”.

We thank His All-Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew for his determined efforts in order to make the Council happen. We thank all who worked effectively that today’s conciliar gathering takes place. Preparing of the Holy and Great

Council despite many obstacles, misunderstandings and critics, required many efforts and sacrifices due to which today we can experience “the unity of spirit in the communication of peace” according to the teaching of the Holy Fathers and the Orthodox Church.

Our love for the Holy Orthodoxy demands that we bear witness to the fullness of our faith in order to be “everything to everyone” (1 Cor. 9,22). Therein lies the guarantee of our future. The martyrdom of our fathers and mothers throughout the ages obliges in a particular way. We surrounding world in which we live is full of pathologies, abnormalities, inconsistent to the spirit of the Holy Church. Our Fathers gave their lives for the sane, unchanged teaching of Christ! The criterion of our unity is awareness in the spirit of the words of saint apostle Paul: “When I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor. 12,10). We experience the unity of faith based on the “Christ’s mind” and not on human, personal wisdom. This is the requirement of Holy and Great Council, that we begin today. It is the Holy and Great Council that is today a great opportunity helping to strengthen the unity and vitality of the Holy Orthodoxy.

One and undivided Orthodox Church, God willing, has the opportunity – in its local diversity – to work out, in the spirit of consensus, a common point of view on many problems that bother our faithful. Therein lies the reception of the achievements of the Council. And that will be our great conciliar gift for the Holy Church at the beginning of the third millennium.

The Orthodox Church in the contemporary world, full of disappointments and divisions, should be an example of love “not of this world”. It’s the Church that puts an end to human reasoning and facilitates the passage towards mutual understanding and unity. And this is exactly what everyone needs. Therefore we should rejoice at its each manifestation. And this manifestation is the Holy and Great Council.

It is vital to remember here the call of saint apostle Paul, when he draws our attention to the fact that the smallest mustard seed of Christ’s truth should be preached in various ways and we therein will rejoice (comp. Philp. 1,18).

May deep faith, humility, good will and faithfulness to the Teaching and Tradition of the Holy Orthodoxy help us in this saintly work.

Concerning the subjects included in the documents approved by the pre-conciliar Synaxis in Chambesy in January of this year, the Holy Synod of the Bishops of the Polish Orthodox Church accepts them, whereas the details will be presented during

the discussions concerning particular questions, especially concerning the document on “The Relations of the Orthodox Church with other Christian confessions”, which rises many controversies.

Pronouncing the above words on behalf of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Polish Orthodox Church I wish the Holy and Great Council the abundance of the grace of the Holy Spirit so that it would support our work in building the Body of Christ’s Holy Orthodox Church.

Your All-Holiness! Thank you for your clear and constructive initial speech containing dogmatic and canonical understanding of conciliarity of the Orthodox Church.

Your voice, coming out of the Council, negatively evaluating the uncanonical activity has a special significance nowadays.

Thanks be to God!

Metropolitan of Warsaw and All Poland