

Moscow Patriarchate keeps losing parishes in Ternopil region

Culture

Posted by:

Posted on : 2017/3/8 14:12:16

Out of 143 participants in the vote, 123 voted in favor of the change

TERNOPIL, Mar 8, 2017 (UBO*) - The majority of members of the Parish of Sts Peter and Paul in the village of Kynahivtsi, Ternopil region, have made a decision to leave the Moscow Patriarchate and change their affiliation to the Kyiv Patriarchate. The church building is under the control of the UOC (MP) supporters and is now guarded by the staff of a Kyivan security company. The agreement with said company was signed by church rector Vitaliy Huryev. Kynahivtsi is the second village, where the faithful leave the UOC (MP) due to this priest. The first was the parish of St. Michael the Archangel in Butyn village, located on the opposite bank of the Gorin River. In Kynahivtsi a "referendum" was already held regarding the desire to change jurisdiction. Out of 143 participants, 123 voted in favor, 12 – against, 6 abstained from voting and 2 wrote "Everything is God's will." These last two ballots were recognized invalid, a member of the initiative group for the transfer to the UOC-KP, secretary of the village assembly Valeriy Ramskyi told to RISU journalist Volodymyr Moroz. "The people have decided between themselves for a long time that we should move to the Ukrainian Church, as the Moscow Patriarchate maintains the conflict although not openly," said Valeriy Ramskyi. "Around two years ago the church was robbed of money and no one knew how, because there was no proper accounting. Two weeks ago, the money was stolen again. People started complaining, decided to go and set up an initiative group. The first meeting was held on February 23, 2017." Thus, on March 4, 2017, the second meeting was held with the participation of 68 local parishioners who confirmed their intention to enter the UOC-KP. Supporters of the Kyiv Patriarchate declared they had no plans to occupy the church building, and decided to re-register the charter of the community as that of the UOC-KP. At the same time, the Diocese of Ternopil of the UOC (MP) argues that the church in Kynahivtsi was in danger of capture on March 4. "In Kynahivtsi they wanted to seize the church building under the same scheme as in Kotyuzhyn. But most of the village stood up to defend their faith and the church of God. With God's help, they managed to defend their legal rights. Disturbingly, these provocative actions occurred in the first week of Lent," says Secretary of the Diocese of Ternopil, UOC (MP), Fr. Stepan Balan. "We hope that common sense and Christian values will prevail over human ambition." The transfer of the parish of St. Stephen Protomartyr from the UOC (MP) to the Kyiv Patriarchate community in the village Kotyuzhyn, Zbarazh district of Ternopil region has almost completed. The relevant documents are currently being prepared. The first meeting in the community of Kotyuzhynah regarding the transfer took place on February 12, and by the end of February the community filed an application to re-register the community charter. According to the community of the UOC-KP, out of 350 local residents 15 remained in the UOC (MP), about 40 including children. The Diocese of Ternopil of the UOC (MP) recognizes that in Kotyuzhyn most people expressed support for the UOC-KP. But they disapprove what has happened.

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*The article above appears through courtesy of the Religious Information Service of Ukraine.
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