

Patriarch: Memory of the Vistula Operation should lead to Polish-Ukrainian mutual understanding

Culture

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According to Patriarch Sviatoslav, the memory of the Vistula Operation and its tragic consequences should lead to inter-ethnic Polish-Ukrainian understanding and dialogue.

From RISU:

On the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the Vistula Operation Patriarch Sviatoslav (Shevchuk) has issued the message in which urged to remember the innocent victims of the forced deportation and denounce the evils perpetrated against the Church, the UGCC Information Department reported. As stated in the document, the purpose of the Vistula Operation was forced resettlement of the Ukrainians who were prohibited to return independently to their homeland. The decision to conduct the action was approved by Politburo of the Polish United Workers' Party on March 29, 1947, and the operation began on April 28, 1947 and covered the territory Lemkivshchyna, Nadsyannya, Holmshyna and Pidlashia. "Seventy years ago, a mortal danger loomed over our Church in postwar Poland. Ideological and political context, as well as ideas hostile to the very existence of the UGCC led to the forced deportation of the population called the Vistula Operation "which caused great suffering to hundreds of thousands of innocent people," says the message. As a result of the Vistula Operation, all Greek Catholic bishops were put in prison. The same fate befell hundreds of faithful and priests. The Church was deprived of temples and all its structure was destroyed. According to St. John Paul II, the Church was even deprived of the right to its own name. "The name of this church sounded only when it was slandered," the Patriarch cited in his Message the Pope's words said in Przemysl in 1992. The patriarch called not only to remember the innocent victims and condemn the evil perpetrated against the Church, but to act so that evil was fully overcome with Christ's spirit of forgiveness, reconciliation and love. "Therefore the anniversary of the criminal deportation must serve us the opportunity to heal the memory so that knowing the truth, through the power and acts of God's Spirit we became freer and stronger," he said. According to Patriarch Sviatoslav, the memory of the Vistula Operation and its tragic consequences should lead to inter-ethnic Polish-Ukrainian understanding and dialogue. "It is with gratitude that we claim that the Polish church and social environment have no shortage of people open to this common journey of healing, mutual forgiveness and full reconciliation. We believe that only by the grace of the Holy Spirit - the Spirit of love, holiness and forgiveness - we can heal the wounds of our national memory, love God and neighbor in peace and build our common European home, ensuring the worthy future for generations to come and Ukrainian Poles for centuries lived and continue to live side by side as good neighbors and brothers in faith," said the hierarch.

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