

SERMON OF HIS ALL-HOLINESS KIRILL, PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUS, GIVEN ON THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARTYRDOM OF THE ROYAL FAMILY ON JULY 17, 2018

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!

Your Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry of Kiev and All Ukraine! Fellow archpastors! Dear brothers and sisters, gathered in a multitude this night before the place where one hundred years ago was committed a terrible crime—wholly innocent people, who had committed their lives to the service of their Motherland, were killed by the evil will of man!

This atrocity still chafes our conscience, still causes us to mentally return to that time and try to understand what happened to our country and to our people. Where did this insanity, this attack come from? Looking from a distance of one hundred years, even if we want to we cannot see all the nuances of the national life of our people, which fade from memory and are missed by even the most penetrating gaze. But such crimes, as were committed here, cannot be accidental. Something stood behind this crime; behind it is the collective guilt of our people, a turn in the historical life of Holy Rus', which led the people into a heavy, terrible impasse.

What happened to our people? After all, the country was covered with churches and monasteries, an absolute majority of the people were baptized, and the churches were filled with people. Why did it happen? Why did the murderers squeeze the trigger, without trembling at what they were doing? It means not everything was favorable. It means the sunlight reflected in the gilded domes was not always refracted into human hearts to strengthen faith in the Lord in them. And we know how over the course of at least 200 years preceding the tragedy of the Ipatiev House some changes occurred in the people's consciousness that gradually but steadily led many to a departure from God, neglect of the commandments, and a loss of spiritual connection with the Church and the centuries-old spiritual tradition.

Why did this happen to our people? Why did they at some point become like a train whose engineer didn't calculate its speed and heads into a steep turn, rushing towards an imminent catastrophe? When did we as people start this turn? We entered when alien thoughts, alien ideals, and an alien worldview, formed under the influence of philosophical and political theories, having nothing in common either with Christianity or our national tradition and culture, began to be perceived by the intelligentsia and aristocracy and even part of the clergy as advanced thoughts by which it was possible to change the people's lives for the better.

Indeed, the idea of changing the life of the people for the better arises whenever there is a plan to abruptly change the course of history. We know that the worst and bloodiest revolutions have always occurred in view of people's aspirations for a better life. The leaders of these revolutions instilled in the people that there is no other way to make life better—only by blood, only through death, only through the destruction of the existing way of life. And at some point, having abandoned their spiritual birthright, having lost their true connection with the Church and God, the intelligentsia, aristocracy, and even, as I have already said, part of the clergy were darkened in mind and infected with the thought of the need to drastically change the course of our national history and to try to build as quickly as possible a world where justice reigns, where there is no bygone separation according to material indicators, where people live peacefully and happily. As a result, many of those captured by this idea reach the point of committing crimes.

A question arises: "Is it possible through crime, through blood, through violence, and through the destruction of holy sites to build a happy life?" History clearly testifies: It is impossible! And, perhaps, the first and most important lesson that we should learn today from the tragedy of a century ago is that no promises of a happy life, no hope for help from outside, from some supposedly more educated and advanced people should seduce our people. We must remember the tragedy of the past. We must develop an immunity to any call to attain to human happiness through the destruction of that which is. Hardly did anyone who called for the destruction of the people's lives destroy their own lives, renouncing their own wellbeing. But with what fury they proposed to do it to everyone! And the people absorbed this lie; and the crowning act of departure from the most sacred and valuable that they had was the hideous execution of the Royal Family—innocent people who had not violated the law. And what kind of law could we even be talking about if it was necessary to kill the Tsar and his family to build a happy life? We know that nothing turned out well, and taught by bitter experience, we must build a robust rejection of any ideas and any leaders who propose to strive for some obscure "happy future" through the destruction of the life of the people, our traditions, and our faith.

Today, gathered here in such a great number, we remember the tragedy of the Ipatiev House. We have lifted up prayers to the Lord, we have prayed to the Emperor and Passion-Bearer Nicholas and those who

suffered with him, that they would pray in Heaven for our earthly Fatherland and for our people and strengthen the Orthodox faith in every subsequent generation of Russians; that faithfulness to God and love for the Fatherland would accompany the lives of the youth and subsequent generations, and that no tragedy of this kind would ever happen again in our land.

May the Lord preserve our Russian land and the Russian people who today live in various countries; and although they are called by various names, are the same people who came out of the Kievan baptismal font, and passing through the most severe historical circumstances, have retained the Orthodox faith until today. May God's blessing be upon our people, upon our Fatherland, and upon our martyric Russian Orthodox Church. May the life of our people be transfigured by the prayers of the New Martyrs and Confessors of the Russian Church—without any upheavals or blood, but upon the firm foundation of faith and hope that God is with us! May the Lord save us all by the prayers of the holy Royal Passion-Bearers and all the New Martyrs!

Amen.

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