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RUSSIA/ FAKE NEWS CORNER: “Ukraine is a Catholic conspiracy”

**RUSSIA/ FAKE NEWS CORNER: “Ukraine
is a Catholic conspiracy, the Pope
is a monster and a thief,” a
Russian Orthodox leader says**

*Protodeacon Vladimir Vasilik defies ridicule by
connecting the war to a plot by Pope Francis to*

incorporate Ukrainian Orthodox into the Catholic Church.

by Massimo Introvigne

Bitter Winter (11.01.2023) – Protodeacon Vladimir Vasilik is not, as you may believe by reading its prose, a lonely madman. Not only is he a scholar who has published about Church history in respected Western journals, but he is a member of the Russian Orthodox Church’s powerful Synodal Liturgical Commission and a frequent contributor to church journals and magazines.

Vasilik took exception to Pope Francis’s Christmas message, where he invited those gathered in St. Peter’s Square in Rome to look at the “faces of our Ukrainian brothers and sisters who are living this Christmas in the dark, in the cold or away from their homes because of the devastation caused by ten months of war.”

While Pope Francis is usually more than moderate in his comments about the Ukrainian war, Vasilik expressed his anger that the Pope did not mention “the Russian brothers and sisters” who also die in the war. Thus, he took the opportunity to “unmask” the Pope and claim that the events in Ukraine ultimately are the results of a sinister plot by the Vatican.

Not only is the Catholic Church conspiring against Russia and Orthodoxy since the 16th century, Vasilik said, it has now become clear that the Vatican organized “the Maidan of 2014. For even the blind can see that the most ardent activists on the Maidan were Uniate Catholic priests [i.e., priests of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church].” Some of Vasilik’s colleagues—the Protodeacon is also an anti-cult activist—believe the 2014 Maidan had really been organized by Scientology, but it is true that they did write that Catholics also cooperated.

Pope Francis is singled out as the mastermind of particularly sinister plots. He became Pope in 2013, and in 2014 the Maidan Revolution happened, an event that in Russian propaganda made the invasions of 2014 and 2022 unavoidable.

Francis, according to Vasilik, is “the main beneficiary” of what is happening in Ukraine. Why? Because the war situation is giving the Ukrainian government the pretext to suppress the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and merge it with the branch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church that is in communion with the Patriarch of Constantinople.

However, Vasilik says, “there are long-term plans for the unification of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Roman Catholic Church. The year is already known—2025—the year of the anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council, which Catholic heretics and Greek traitors to Orthodoxy are going to celebrate in such a perverted way. And they decided to choose Ukraine as a testing ground for such an alliance. The idea is simple—the creation of a single national church of Ukraine. First, schismatic groups are driven into the so-called OCU [the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in communion with Constantinople], and then the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate is attached to it, not willingly, but by hook or by crook. And then all this is connected with the Uniates. Thus, a single Ukrainian church of the Eastern rite is being created.”

Pope Francis, Vasilik says, is a monster, “a crocodile who, when he eats his prey, sheds tears incessantly, but eats, nonetheless. In the same way, the Pope of Rome can weep, lament, mourn. However, this will not stop him from eating the Orthodox—his work is such, more precisely, his nature is such. He is not the Pope, not a father, but he is a thief, a real thief. And ‘the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy’ (John 10:10).”

Protodeacon Vasilik has some hope for the new year, though. He

hopes 2023 will bring peace. But peace, he explains, is “something we can acquire only through war.” Not the “commercial war” some Russian commanders fought in Ukraine—which explains, or so Vasilik believes, why they preferred to abandon Ukrainian cities rather than destroying their valuable infrastructures—but a full-fledged holy war. Either we win, Vasilik proclaims, or “we will disappear, as a country and a people. Or even disappear physically. In this case, we have only one choice: win or die. You cannot fight and trade at the same time. However, for some reason, these elementary truth did not sound convincing to some of our commanders. I wish then to sound the alarm for them, and tell them than in 2023 Russia will be renewed, cleansed of its sins—abortion, corruption, embezzlement, and the presence of atheists and cultists—, and finally of obscenity. Then, finally, Russia will become Holy Russia.”

Massimo Introvigne (born June 14, 1955 in Rome) is an Italian sociologist of religions. He is the founder and managing director of the Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR), an international network of scholars who study new religious movements. Introvigne is the author of some 70 books and more than 100 articles in the field of sociology of religion. He was the main author of the *Enciclopedia delle religioni in Italia* (*Encyclopedia of Religions in Italy*). He is a member of the editorial board for the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* and of the executive board of University of California Press' *Nova Religio*. From January 5 to December 31, 2011, he has served as the “Representative on combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination, with a special focus on discrimination against Christians and members of other religions” of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). From 2012 to 2015 he served as chairperson of the Observatory of Religious Liberty, instituted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to monitor problems of religious liberty on a worldwide scale.

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