



Cardinal Husar of Ukraine Condemns Desecration of Kiev Synagogue

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Honored Fellow Citizens:

On Saturday, 13 April 2002, the Central Synagogue in Kiev was attacked. Even though the perpetrators who committed this heinous act have not been identified yet and the reasons are still not clarified, we feel a strong need to denounce the desecration of a sacred place. The twenty-first century, which began with the jubilee year, was to become a time of deep spiritual contemplation, cleansing of the past and reconciliation between people, thus giving hope for a better future. However, already after a short period of time, we have become disillusioned. Utterly horrified, mankind witnessed events filled with hatred, injustice and an overwhelming lust for revenge, which testified both to the absence of healthy moral foundations and to the sick status of people's souls and the mentality of the community.

Under such circumstances, people's religious convictions would seem to be a reliable aid. But in reality they are in many cases subjected to manipulation and abuse, which has as its goal entirely nonreligious ends. The consequences of such a spiritual crisis do not need to be mentioned, since we have witnessed them throughout most of the 20th century.

Everything that takes place in the religious scene can potentially occur in relations between individuals and whole communities. Extreme nationalism based on the negation of the rights and authentic ideals of other communities is far from Christian patriotism and differs drastically from healthy nationalism and true love for one's homeland. Establishing one's own identity should not demand hatred of everything that is different.

The current situation in the world and in our society urges us once again to ponder how much attention should be paid and how much effort exerted in order to prevent religious or national extremism from threatening the peaceful existence of Ukrainians in particular and

mankind in general. Our intensive activities in this field should be based on deep respect for the human being, on the equality of rights of all people without dividing them into 'us' and 'them,' and on justice, which is epitomized in our willingness to do good to all, because as Christians we believe that all people are the children of God. Only on the basis of such principles can we find our true identity and hope for a better future.

Source: press service of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.