

**Remarks of Patriarch Sviatoslav Shevchuk
during the Sheptytsky Institute Banquet
at the University of St. Michael's College
in the University of Toronto
September 28, 2016**

Your Eminence, Your Excellencies, President Mulroney, Honored Guests!

A little over two years ago we were gathered here in this very Canada Room to support the Sheptytsky Institute, while reflecting together on the still fresh events of the Revolution of Dignity in which the various faith communities of Ukraine worked together to support a nation in its struggle for effective justice and true freedom. Ukrainian Greco-Catholics stood together with Roman Catholics, Protestants, the various Orthodox Churches of Ukraine, as well as Jews and Muslims. Together we prayed. This prayer was accompanied by spontaneous acts of incredible love and generosity. What was the Church's role in those amazing moments? Precisely to focus attention on the dignity of the children of God, to support them in their struggle, to keep them hopeful in the face of daunting odds, to encourage the noblest efforts and to restrain impassioned impulses. The Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church was proud to stand with the people in their legitimate aspirations. And thus we have stood, through the ravages of foreign occupation by an aggressive neighbor that wages hybrid war and cynically "manages" information for brutal gain.

For standing with the people of Ukraine —people of various religions and various ethnicities—our Church has been singled out by the Kremlin's propaganda machine as some sort of ultranationalist force bent on sowing hatred towards the Orthodox culture of Russia, and the single greatest impediment to worldwide Orthodox-Catholic reconciliation.

That is why I find it important to be able to stand before you today at this great university and state the following in the most unequivocal terms. The Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church, the largest of the Eastern Catholic Churches is not in any way opposed to the Orthodox Churches. We are an Orthodox Church, with Orthodox theology, liturgy, spirituality and canonical tradition that chooses to manifest this Orthodoxy in the spirit of the first Christian millennium, in communion with Rome. We are witnesses to the fact that Christian East and West not only have an obligation to seek some vague rapprochement, but are called by our Savior Himself to actually live the unity of one Body of Christ, not in the subjugation of one to another, but in the loving union of the Three Divine Persons who live not three lives parallel to each other, but one life: a life of self-emptying love, that gives life rather than take it. It is our mission, as a Church that experienced great persecution and martyrdom in the twentieth century, to stand up for

those who experience such persecution today: our brothers and sisters the Copts of Egypt, the Melkites, Chaldeans, Syrian Orthodox, Assyrians, and others in the Middle East. It is our duty to help them tell their stories in this, one of the most respected forums of the world.

That is why I wish to express my own thanks and the profound gratitude of my Church to President David Mulrone and Dean James Ginther of Saint Michael's College and the Collegium for making it possible for the Sheptytsky Institute to find a home within St. Michael's College, the Toronto School of Theology, and the broader University of Toronto community. We can and tonight we are breathing together like two lungs of one body, in the beloved phrase of St. John Paul II, and thinking together in the metaphor of the Sheptytsky Institute's founder, Fr. Andriy Chirovsky, like two hemispheres of one brain. This is possible because the University of St. Michael's College has made a home for the Sheptytsky Institute, and through it, for the whole Christian East, so that we can think and breathe and live and struggle together for the truth.

To all supporters of the Sheptytsky Institute, I say "Thank you" especially the Officers and the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute Foundation, To the professors and staff of the Sheptytsky Institute, who have have given the better part of their adult lives so that we could be here to celebrate this day, I say "God bless you!" To St. Michael's College I say: "Brothers and Sisters, with you here today we are home!" At this third founding of the Sheptytsky Institute, I wait with impatience for the day when students from Ukraine, among many others, can earn their doctorates here. As I have said before, and I will never tire of saying: in Ukraine we have the Ukrainian Catholic University, but in the diaspora we have the Sheptytsky Institute. Support it, please! Для всіх нас бережіть і розвивайте цей дуже важливий інститут! Інвестуйте в нього. [For all of us, protect and develop this institute! Invest in it.] St. Paul used to say: I would have all of you be imitators of me (1 Cor. 4:16) . But I tell you: "I support the Sheptytsky Institute, and I would have all of you be imitators of me in this."

Thank you to Fr. Peter Galadza and the organizers of this celebration, to the Sheptytsky Institute Choir for bringing beauty to bear on it, to the negotiating teams that worked so long and so hard to make the agreement between St. Michael's and the Sheptytsky Institute possible. Thank you to Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and Saint Paul University in Ottawa for giving a home to the Sheptytsky Institute until now. Thank you to all of you present and to all the benefactors for your support.

Благословення Господнє на Вас! [The blessing of the Lord be upon you!] Thank you! Слава Ісусу Христу! Glory to Jesus Christ!