

overcome the consequences of the conflicts from the turn of 1980s and 1990s".

The issue of the Ukrainian Catholic Church is at the core of the "conflicts" to which Hilarion was referring. Although it was unbanned following the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was left without its original churches, which had been seized by the Communists under Soviet rule and later transferred to the Orthodox Church.

Still, "on several occasions, Pope Francis has shown spiritual sympathy towards the Orthodox Church and a desire for closer contacts," Hilarion said. It is his hope that under the new pontificate "relations of alliance will develop and that our ties will be strengthened."



***Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum;
habemus Papam:
Eminentissimum ac Reverendissimum Dominum,
Dominum Georgium Marium
Sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae Cardinalem Bergoglio
qui sibi nomen imposuit Franciscum.***

Statement on our new Pope from Metropolitan William

Congratulations to our newly-elected Pope Francis I. The first modern-day Pope born outside of Europe, the first Jesuit, and the first to be named after Saint Francis, Pope Francis has been very supportive of the Eastern Catholic Churches in Latin America during his tenure as Archbishop of Buenos Aires in his native Argentina. For this, we are especially thankful.

Bishop Gerald Dino of Phoenix and I are in Rome and will represent our Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Church at his enthronement at Saint Peter's Basilica on Tuesday, March 19. You can already feel the joy, hope and excitement for the future.

As we begin to remember his name in the litanies of the Divine Liturgy and in our daily prayer, we ask that our new Pope receives strength from the Father and wisdom from the Holy Spirit.

As he assumes his place as our Holy Father, we wish him peace, health, and happiness for many blessed and happy years.



Patriarch Sviatoslav: Newly elected Pope knows Ukrainian Catholic Church, its Liturgy and Spirituality

"I would first like to say that the newly elected Pope Francis was mentored by one of our priests, Stepan Chmil who is now buried in the basilica of St. Sophia in Rome. Today's Pope, during his time as a student of the Salesian school, awoke many hours before his classmates to concelebrate at our Divine Liturgy with Fr. Stepan. He knows our Tradition very well, as well as our Liturgy.

The last time I had an opportunity to see him was as I was preparing to leave Argentina for Ukraine. I asked him to bear witness to the process of beatifying Fr. Stepan Chmil, to which, he gladly agreed. The Holy Father very well knows not only of our Church, but also our liturgy, our rites, and our spirituality.

Apart from this, Pope Francis, as archbishop of Buenos Aires, was assigned as ordinary for Eastern Catholics, specifically those who at the time did not have members of their own hierarchy. Our Eparchy in Argentina is, let's say, suffragan to the Archbishop's seat of Buenos Aires. In this way, Cardinal Bergoglio, always took care of our Church in Argentina; and as a young bishop, I took my first steps in episcopal ministry under his watchful eyes and help. Because of this, I am positive that the Holy Father will be a great help to our Church, and I expect that great things await our Church with this Pope.

In regards to the personality of the new Holy Father - he is an incredibly modest person. For example, as archbishop of Buenos Aires, he never relied on his own automobile, rather relying on public transportation, always in simple clothing. He mostly stands out in his enormous care for the less-fortunate, visiting the most impoverished neighborhoods. He is a person, I would say, of great pastoral foundation.

As a Jesuit, Pope Francis is an incredibly deep intellectual. I can attest to the fact that his homilies are quite short, sometimes no longer than five or six sentences, but he manages to fill them with such deep meaning, always leaving the faithful in silent contemplation upwards of five-to-seven minutes". (Translation by Julian Hayda) www.risu.org.ua

RISU correspondent in Rome Oksana Shkodziska took the commentary of Patriarch Sviatoslav Shevchuk about newly elected Pope Francis I.

For the first time since the Great Schism, Ecumenical Patriarch to attend pope's inaugural Mass

The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I will attend Pope Francis's inaugural Mass. The Ecumenical Patriarchate Press Office informed *AsiaNews* about the decision, noting that this is the first time such an event occurs since the Catholic-Orthodox split in 1054, an important sign for Christian unity.

The ecumenical patriarch will be accompanied by Ioannis Zizioulas, metropolitan of Pergamon and co-president of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Church, as well as Tarassios, Orthodox Metropolitan of Argentina, and Gennadios, Orthodox Metropolitan of Italy.

Relations between Catholics and Orthodox have been improving since the Second Vatican Council through mutual visits, acts of friendship and theological dialogue. Under Benedict XVI, the dialogue picked up in earnest after a lull. In trying to promote it, the pope suggested ways to express the primacy of Peter's successor that could be acceptable to the Orthodox, finding his inspiration from the undivided Church of the first millennium.

Catholic ecumenism has met however with great resistance from the Russian Orthodox Church and the Moscow Patriarchate, seat of the 'Third Rome'. The head of the Russian Orthodox Church's Department for External Relations, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, said on Thursday that a meeting between the pope and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow was "possible but the place and timing will depend on how quickly we will