



Unia brzeska - Tekst angielski

To whom it may concern. Gathered in the name of God at a synod in St. Nicholas Church in the city of Brest on the 9th day of October, the year of our Lord 1596, we, the undersigned metropolitan and bishops of the Greek Rite, hereby announce that – caring for the foundation of the Holy Church of our Lord Jesus Christ – we believe that for the sake of its strength the Christian Church should be based on one Peter as its rock and ruler so that there is one head on one body, one host in one house and one dispenser of the graces of God who can rule the people for their good and guarantee that the Church, established in the times of the apostles, lives forever and that there continues to be one authority, the descendant of Saint Peter, the Pope in Rome, to whom all patriarchs can resort with their doubts in faith and spiritual strength and in ecclesiastical court cases and appeals.

It appears from councils, canons and writings by holy fathers and from the rules of holy fathers found in our Slavic writings translated in the past from Greek; it is emphasised by old holy fathers of the Eastern Orthodox Church who accept the authority of the Holy See over the bishops of the whole world. The authority and the blessing of the Holy See was known and accepted by Byzantine patriarchs for a long time as well, from whom the Ruthenian Church has taken its faith. They abandoned it many times but kept returning to obedience. Finally, Patriarch Joseph and Byzantine Emperor John VIII Palaiologos pledged their complete obedience during the Council of Florence in 1439 and admitted that the Pope in Rome was the master and originator of all Christianity and the legal successor to Saint Peter. The same Council in Florence was also attended by our Metropolitan of Kiev Isidore, who led to the union of the Byzantine Patriarchate and all its churches and confirmed all those Ruthenian countries in their obedience to the Roman Church. This is why Polish kings, namely Władysław, the King of Poland and Hungary, and others wrote a charter for the clergy of the Greek Rite, granting them freedoms of the Roman Catholic Church at the general Sejm.



When the Byzantine patriarchs left the ecclesiastical union, they fell under the pagan and Turkish power because of their sin of apostasy and because they shattered the union of the Church. Many mistakes and misdeeds were committed, the legal supervision over the Ruthenian countries was reduced and many sacrilegious acts were performed, leading to heresy that spread over almost whole Ruthenia, wreaking havoc on churches and harming our praise for God. Guided by our conscience and noticing the threatened salvation of the flock God has entrusted us with and convinced that we do not want to participate in the grave sin of the Byzantine patriarchs and the resulting pagan slavery, support them in rejecting the unity of the Church nor let churches be ravaged and men's souls be doomed because of the heresy, we sent the following reverend envoys to Pope Clement VIII at the Holy See last year: Bishop of Lodomeria and Brest Hipaty and Bishop of Lutsk and Ostroh Cyryl Terlecki, with a message and permission from His Majesty King Sigismund III, our pious ruler – may God grant him long and fortunate reign – asking him to accept our pledge of obedience to him, the highest Shepherd of the Catholic Church, free us from the authority of the Byzantine patriarchs, absolve us, allow us to keep the rite and ceremonies of the Eastern Greek Church and refrain from making any changes to our churches. He indeed accepted our request, granted his charters and wrote a document ordering us to come to a synod and proclaim our faith and obedience to the Holy See and Pope Clement VIII and his successor. We did as ordered, as proven by the documents bearing our signatures and seals. We signed them and handed them over to the envoys of Pope Clement VIII who attended the synod, i.e. Reverend Archbishop of Lvov Jan Dymitr Solikowski and Bishop of Lutsk and Chełm Bernard Maciejowski, in presence of the envoys of His Majesty King Sigismund III: Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł, a duke from Olyka and Nyasvizh and the Trakai Province Governor, Leon Sapieha, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Dymitr Chalecki, the Treasurer of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Brest County Governor and many other great clergymen and laymen.