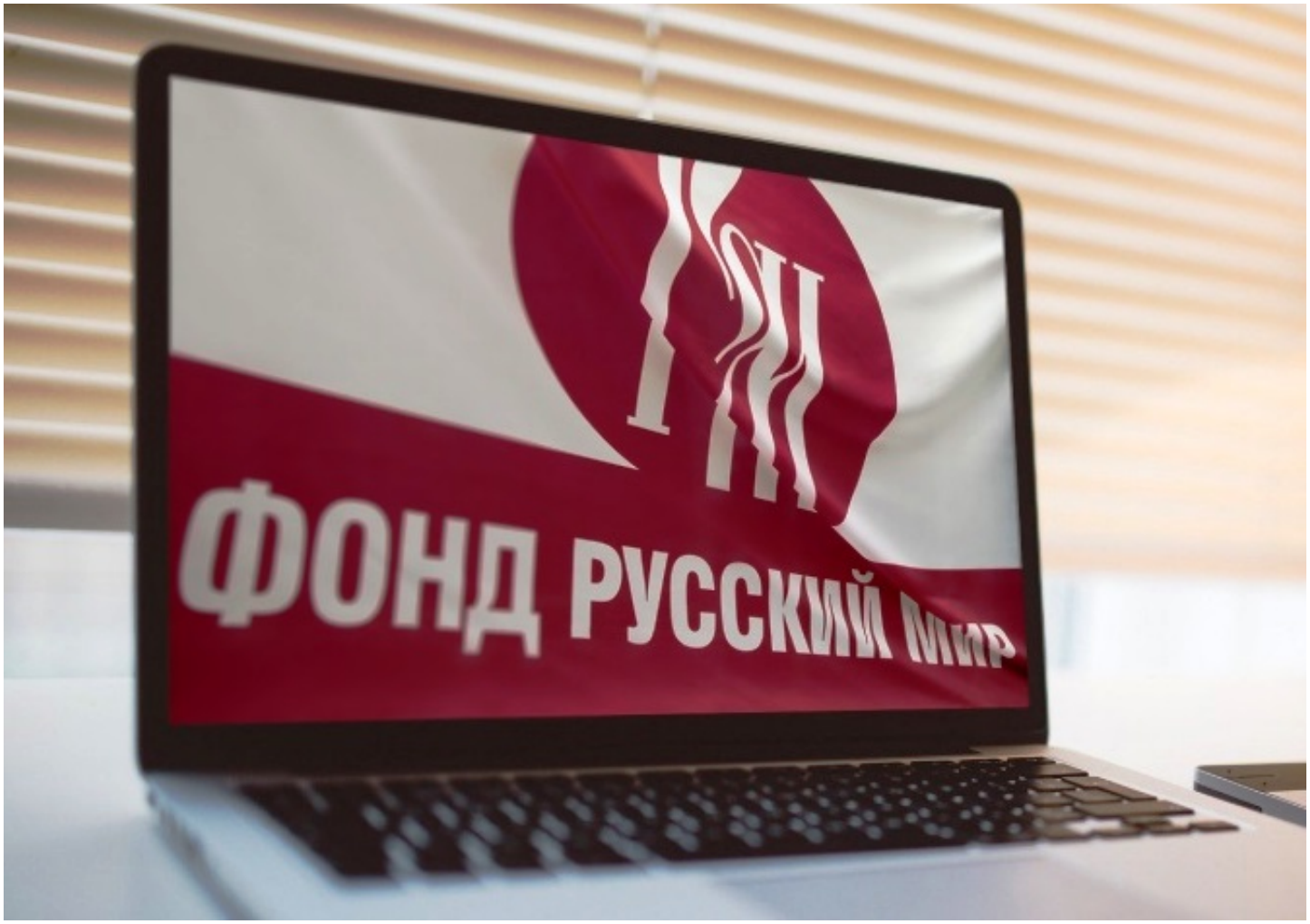
Opening of the XIV Assembly of the Russki Mir foundation



On November 3, 2020, the regular XIV Assembly of the Russki Mir foundation has opened. According to the tradition established since 2007, the Assemblies are held by the Russki Mir Foundation on the eve of the Day of the People's Unity. Due to the unfortunate epidemic situation, this year the Russki Mir Assembly is held for the first time in the online mode; it has united a number of issue events to be held for several days.

The theme of the XIV Assembly is 'The Russian World Online'. The forum was opened by V. A. Nikonov, chairman of the Russki Mir Foundation Board, chairman of the State Duma Education and Science Committee.

Messages of greetings were brought to the organizers and participants of the Assembly from President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia,

Chairman of the Russian Government M. Mishustin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, S. Lavrov and others.

In his message to the forum, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill noted in particular:

‘For the last months, humanity has had to learn to live in a new reality linked with the spread of the coronavirus infection. Restrictions that we all have to observe today to prevent a growth of morbidity have shown us how fragile our world is and how valuable is our communication face to face and the opportunity for us to meet with our kin and loved people. At the same time, the pandemic has compelled us to master profoundly the modern means of communication, to develop further various cultural projects and educational work in the network format’.

After the solemn opening, a panel discussion on the main theme took place; participating it is were K. Kosachev, chairman of the Council of the Federation Committee for International Affairs; V. Tolstoy, president of the International Association of Russian Language and Literature Teachers; M. Shvydkoy, Presidential special representatives for international cultural cooperation; Academician A. Torknov, rector of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations; M. Drozdov, chairman of the World Coordination Council of Russian Compatriots Living Abroad; Ms. Z. Tregubova, general director of the State Treryzkov Gallery; Prof. Raphael Guzman Tirado, Chair of Slavonik and Greek Philology, Universithy of Granada, Spain; Prof. Carol Apollonio, Duke University, USA; N. Svetnitsky, chairman of the Board of the Association of Leaders of Russian Theaters Abroad, president of the International Culture-Education Union ‘Russian Club’, director of the Griboyedov Tbilisi State Russian Drama Theatre, Georgia.

With a blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, the Moscow Patriarchate’s department for external church relations was represented by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, DECR chairman, member of the Patrons’ Board of the Russki Mir Foundation. Addressing the Assembly’s theme ‘Russian World Online’, he said:

‘Pastoral care and charitable works are especially relevant today when people have come to feel keenly their loneliness. Using modern telecommunication means, we seek to convey to our compatriots the beauty of the Orthodox liturgy, to answer people’s disturbing questions by means of teleconferences. Today, projects for religious education are developed in the online mode. This extraordinary situation has given us all an excellent opportunity for think over the goal of one’s life. Readiness to support one’s neighbour, to sacrifice oneself in hard conditions – these are the basics of the Russian world and Russian soul’.

The archpastor also reminded the audience of the important date that falls on this year – the centenary

of the exodus of our compatriots from the Crimea:

‘In November 1920, the last squadrons of the Imperial Black Sea Fleet left the Crimea taking to obscurity those who could not reconcile themselves to the trample upon the faith, ideals and values handed down by ancestors and cherished by contemporaries. Uncommon and sometimes tragic human destinies created a basis for a great community, which we call today the Russian near and far abroad or Russki Mir. It was not only people of noble families who found themselves in diaspora but also people from other estates for whom there was no longer a place in the Motherland. A considerable part of the episcopate, clergy and laity of the Russian Orthodox Church had to suffer the same fate. The arrangement of church administration, the forced break up with the central church leadership that remained in Moscow became a painful wound on the body of our Church. It had to be healed and ways to restore the God-commanded unity had to be found.

The actions of many church workers brought forth their fruits: by God’s mercy, decades later we managed to come to unity. Thus in 2007, the canonical community of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia with the Church in the Motherland was restored, and a year ago today, during the Divine Liturgy in the Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill presented Archbishop Ioann (Renneto) of Dubna with a charter on restoration of the unity of the Archdiocese of Western European Parishes of Russian Tradition with the Russian Orthodox Church. It has certainly become an historic event for our compatriots living in Europe, the real scale of which can be assessed by historians in future. Looking back at the past, we, with gratitude to God, can speak of the gathering of once dispersed Russian Orthodoxy’.

A round-table conference on Interreligious Dialogue Online will take place on November 9 as part of the Assembly with the participation of representatives of traditional religious communities in Russia. It will deal with the educational-humanitarian work with believers outside churches and with network support for this work.

DECR Communication Service

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