



## **Patriarch Kirill meets with Germany's ambassador to Russia**



On 23 January 2020, His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, met with Germany's Ambassador to Russia, H. E. Dr Géza Andreas von Geyr, at the patriarchal and synodal residence at the St. Daniel Monastery.

Participating in the meeting were also Archpriest Sergiy Zvonarev, secretary for the far abroad, Department for External Church Relations, and Mr. Jan Kantorchik, head of the culture department, Embassy of Germany.

Welcoming the guests, His Holiness pointed to the good relations established between the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations and the German embassy in Russia. "The Russian Church also has a whole history of relations with Christians in your country", he continued making a special mention of the contacts with the Evangelical Church and the Catholic Church in Germany. "It is not accidental because the history of Russian-German relations as a whole is different in many ways

from that of Russia's relations with many other countries. There have been in it a great deal of important events but we know that the history of relations between our two countries was also darkened by wars", he stated.

"In my time I took an active part in communication with Christians in your country and I remember how we used to hold various seminars and to meet on various occasions, first of all, in order to evaluate the modern history of relations between our two countries, which was dramatic in the 20<sup>th</sup> century", His Holiness said, "In this dialogue, we have agreed that the role played the Evangelical Church in Germany in relations with the Russian Orthodox Church in post-war time was very positive from the point of view of reconciliation between our two nations".

His Holiness reminded the guests that these contacts began in the 50<sup>th</sup> when the memory of the war was still fresh and said, "I have a very warm memory of the visits made to our Church by high-ranking representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany. They were aware of what was the country they came to, of what were the feelings of those who experienced the terrible tragedy of war, and at the same time they courageously and open-heartedly addressed people in our churches, speaking before a tremendous number of Orthodox believers". As His Holiness noted, the guests were amazed by people's response. "Sharing with us, they said they did not expect such a friendly and open response, such a kind attitude to representatives of Germany. This response testified that our people draw a clear line between the insane policy pursued by the fascist regime and the true attitude of the German people to Russia".

"Today we are living in a completely different epoch, but the past should be remembered, also about how our nations came out of the hard consequences of World War II", His Holiness stated.

Noting that today "with existing excellent conditions for dialogue, for developing bilateral relations" active cooperation is maintained in political, economic and cultural areas, His Holiness also pointed to the importance of inter-church relations between Germany and Russia.

On his part, the German ambassador thanked Patriarch Kirill for the warm welcome. He expressed solidarity with His Holiness' idea that in a reflection on strategic issues of the future cooperation between Russia and Germany, it is necessary to be aware of the historical depth of mutual relations between the two countries.

Speaking about his own experience of still a short stay as Germany's diplomatic representative in Russia, Dr Géza Andreas von Geyr said, "Aware of all the complexity of our common history, I especially appreciate the great sympathy shown to us, Germans".

The ambassador also noted that contacts between the Russian Orthodox Church and Christians in Germany have a great importance for the development of relations between the two nations, “since Churches are an important part of society”, and expressed his readiness to promote the development of these relations.

*DECR Communication Service*

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