Patriarch Kirill leads ceremony of presenting Prize of International Foundation of the Unity of Orthodox Nations to Patriarch Theophilos



On November 21, 2019, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia led the 19th annual ceremony of presenting Patriarch Alexy II Prize of the International Public Foundation “For Outstanding Work for Strengthening the Unity of Orthodox Nations and for Asserting and Promoting Christian Values in the Life of Society”- 2018. The ceremony took place at the Cathedral Church of Christ the Savour Hall of Church Councils. The previous ceremony for 2017 took place last May.

The 2018 prise went to His Beatitude Theophilos III of the Holy City of Jerusalem and All Palestine.

Present at the ceremony were Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna, patriarchal vicar of the Moscow Patriarchate; Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and All Moldova; Metropolitan Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan, head of the Metropolia of Kazakhstan; Metropolitan Varsonofy of Sankt-Petersburg and Ladoga; Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Zaslavsk, Patriarchate Exarch for all Belarus;

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations; Metropolitan Dionisiy of Voskresensk, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; and hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church who had come to Moscow for the 50th anniversary of the tonsure and ordination of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill.

Present at the ceremony were also Metropolitan Niphon of Philippopolis, representative of the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia; Bishop Irenaeus of Bac (Serbian Orthodox Church), Bishop Anthony of Moravici (Serbian Orthodox Church), Archimandrite Seraphim (Shemyatovsky) (Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia); as well as political and public figures.

The event began with the prayer “To the Heavenly King” and demonstration of a documentary on major landmarks and events in the history of the International Foundation of the Unity of Orthodox Nations.

President of the Foundation V. Alekseyev made introductory remarks and invited His Holiness Kirill to open the award ceremony.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church greeted the assembly saying, “Today, as the elements of this word seek to destroy the unity of Holy Orthodoxy, the Church of Jerusalem acquires a special importance as the common Mother for all the Churches”.

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem, he said, “is distinguished for his unshakable firmness in observing the canonical order, pastoral wisdom and prudence, which has gained him sincere respect and real authority throughout the Orthodox world”.

After announcing that the prize was awarded to His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos, his biography was presented illustrated by video materials.

The Primate of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem was invited to the stage. Patriarch Kirill and Mr. V. Alekseyev presented him with a token and diploma of the prize. “Many Years” was sung by a massed choir accompanied by an orchestra.

The Primate of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem in his address to the participants in the ceremony expressed “deep concern about the present difficulties that mar the life of the Church and about the imminent dangers we are in by our unfortunate divisions”.

His Beatitude invited the Primates of Orthodox Churches to “a fraternal gathering in love” so that “counsel will be taken together for the preservation of our unity in Eucharistic communion”. He proposed

to hold this meeting in Amman, the capital of the Kingdom of Jordan. This country is a canonical territory of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

“In hosting this sacred gathering, in the capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, we do so conscious of the role that His Majesty King Abdullah II continues to play as the Custodian of the Christian and Muslim Holy Sites in the Holy Land, and the commitment of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in ensuring that Jordan remains a country where Christians pursue their religious worship without hindrance and where all are welcome”, His Beatitude said.

In conclusion of his speech, Patriarch Theophilos said addressing Patriarch Kirill, “Dear brother in Christ, Patriarch Kirill, we receive it with this great hope that the unity of the Orthodox world, of which this prize is a symbol, may be lived out, among us all who serve in the “vineyard of our Lord”, and that we maintain the common Chalice in unity and fraternal love in Christ”.

After that, a concert took place. Russian performers and choirs recited Russian and foreign ecclesial

and folk music.

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