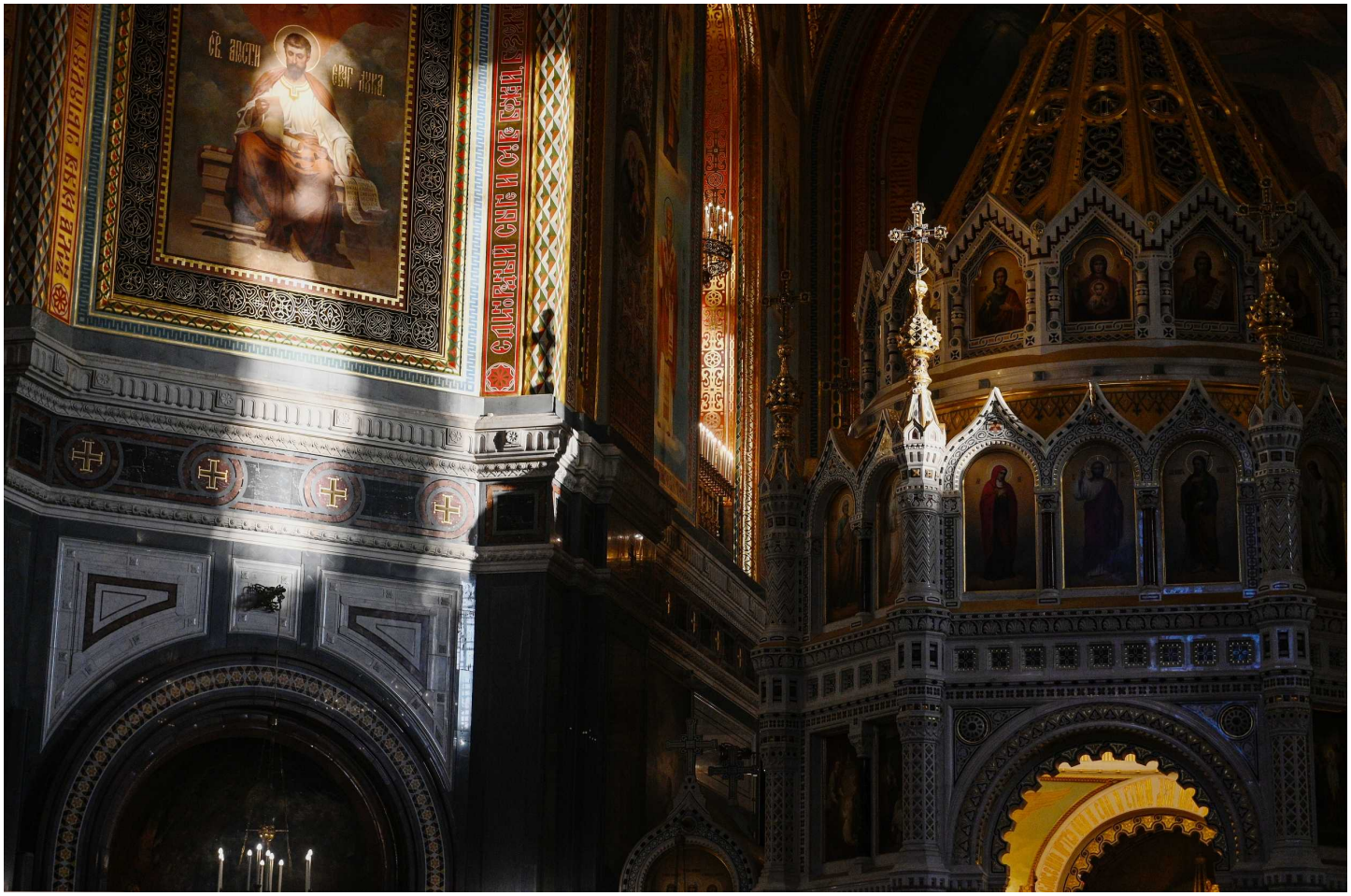
Primates of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem and the Russian Orthodox Church celebrate Liturgy at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour



On 21st November 2019, commemoration day of the Synaxis of Archangel Michael and Other Heavenly Bodiless Powers, the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of monastic tonsure and ordination of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia continued in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated by the Primates of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem and the Russian Orthodox Church.

Concelebrating with His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of the Holy City of Jerusalem and All Palestine and His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia were the permanent members of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church; some three hundred hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate who had arrived in Moscow for the celebrations; and hierarchs and clergy of the Local

Orthodox Churches.

After the Liturgy His Holiness Patriarch Kirill greeted His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos and all the concelebrants and worshippers.

The Primate of the Church of Jerusalem said in response:

> Your Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, beloved Brother in Christ,
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> The grace of the Holy Spirit has brought us to the holy blessed land of Russia, sanctified by the blood of thousands of martyrs. As you have mentioned, today we are celebrating the Synaxis of Archangel Michael and Other Heavenly Bodiless Powers. It is not fortuitous, for this feast reminds us about the unity of the Church, which is the tneanthropic Body of Christ.
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> Our joy is sincere. It is a great blessing that today we have had the opportunity to partake of the common Chalice, thus in the most vivid way bearing witness to the unity of Orthodoxy in Christ.
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> Indeed, the Church today is undergoing ordeals but, as St. John Chrysostom said, the church vessel is “tossed by waves yet not submerged; vexed by storms yet suffers no shipwreck.”
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> As you have rightly noted, in the times of difficulties for the Russian Orthodox Church, for the Russian people, the Church of Jerusalem always strived to help, as, for instance, on the occasion that you mentioned, when in the 17th century Patriarch Theophanes III of Jerusalem restored the Orthodox hierarchy in the territory of the modern-day Ukraine, which had been destroyed by the Greek-Catholic Unia.
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> The Golgotha and the Holy Tomb are sanctified by the blood of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. These shrines are the guarantee of our Orthodox unity. It is a great spiritual joy that we have the opportunity to partake of one Chalice of Christ’s love and thus to convey the blessing of the Holy and Life-Giving Sepulchre to the pious Russian people and to your personally, Your Holiness.
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> I want to offer my assurances that the Holy Church of Jerusalem, which is the Mother of all Churches, is praying at the Holy Sepulchre and at the Golgotha, wishing that the love and truth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ may reign.
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> Availing myself of this opportunity, I would like to convey my ardent appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Putin, President of Russia, who, despite his busy schedule, received us

on your birthday. We had a very constructive meeting, during which Mr. President spoke with concern about the Christians in the Holy Land, about the Christian nature of Jerusalem, as well as about the Orthodoxy in general, about its unity. We are grateful to His Excellency Mr. President and to you, Your Holiness, for making this meeting possible.

The Orthodox Church is the Church of Resurrection, which is the hope in Christ. For centuries the Orthodox Church has been living in this hope. What we see now before our eyes is the exact reflection of the Holy Sepulchre, and on behalf of the Church of Jerusalem, of all the pious people, as well as on behalf of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre I can only proclaim – Christ is Risen!

At the conclusion His Holiness Patriarch Kirill once again greeted the hierarchs and the clergy, saying: “May the Lord help each of us in our labours in order to preserve our flock and our people in the Orthodox faith, and may He help us all work together in strengthening the Orthodox unity.”

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