# During Liturgy at Church of Christ the Saviour Patriarch Kirill presents Archbishop Ioann of Dubna with charter on restoration of unity of Archdiocese of Western European Parishes of Russian tradition with Russian Orthodox Church



From November 2 to 4, 2019, festivities are being held in Moscow to celebrate the Archdiocese of Western European Parishes of Russian Tradition's joining the Russian Orthodox Church, timed to the Day of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God and the Day of People's Unity.

On September 28, 2019, a pastoral assembly of the clergy of the Archdiocese of Western European Parishes of Russian Tradition resolved by a majority vote to petition for their canonical incorporation into the Moscow Patriarchate. This decision was made in the context of the resolution made by the Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople on November 27, 2018, to dissolve the archdiocese. On October 7, 2019, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church resolved to receive in the Moscow Patriarchate's

jurisdiction the clergy and parishes of the archdiocese who expressed their wish to join it.

A delegation of over 100 members, led by Archbishop Ioann of Dubna, administrator of the Archdiocese of Western European Parishes of Russian Tradition, came to Moscow for the celebrations. It included descendants of the first wave emigres who left Russia in the early 20th century, descendants of displaced persons, Russian, Byelorussian, Ukrainian, Moldavian emigres of the last decades, as well as representatives of Central and Western European peoples – French, Belgian, Dutch, German, English, Scotch, Romanian, Polish and Serbian.

On November 2, the delegation visited the Donskoy Patriarchal Monastery, the St. Sergius Laura of the Holy Trinity and the historic Moscow Diocesan House.

On November 3, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, with the participation of Archbishop Ioann of Dubna and the delegation members in holy orders, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. The solemn service completed the incorporation of the archdiocese into the Russian Orthodox Church.

Upon his arrival in the Church of Christ the Saviour, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church venerated the relics of St. Philaret (Drozdov), Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna. During the liturgy, His Holiness was assisted by a great assembly of hierarchs who came from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Belarus, France, Great Britain, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain. Among his concelebrants were high church officials of the Moscow Patriarchate and clergy of the Archdiocese of Western European Parishes and the Russian Orthodox Church.

Among the worshippers were members of the Archdiocese of Western European Parishes delegation. The liturgy was celebrated in Church Slavonic, French, German and English.

Present at the service were chairman of the State Duma Committee for Development of Civil Society and for Public and Religious Organizations S. Gavrilov, first deputy chairman of the Moscow Regional Duma N. Chaplin, head of the Synodal Department for the Church's Relations with Society and Media and acting head of the Patriarchal Press Service V. Legoida.

The Patriarchate service was broadcast live by Soyuz and Spas TV channels.

After the Third Antiphon, Protodeacon Constantine Bargan read out the text of the Patriarchal and Synodal Charter on the restoration of the unity of the Archdiocese of Western European Parishes of Russian Tradition with the Russian Orthodox Church. Then he took the charter to His Holiness Kirill who handed it over to Archbishop Ioann with words: 'This Patriarchal and Synodal Charter is presented to

mark the reunion of the Archdiocese of Western European Parishes of Russian Tradition with the Russian Orthodox Church'.

Accompanied by the singing of the thanksgiving troparion 'Grateful are…, Patriarch Kirill and Archbishop Ioann moved to the pulpit from which the Primate of the Russian Church announced the decree on the elevation of Archbishop Ioann of Dubna to the rank of metropolitan, with preservation of the liturgical mention of His Eminence as Archbishop of Western European Parishes'. His Holiness exclaimed 'Axios' and crowned Archbishop Ioann with a white klobuk.

Then His Holiness awarded Protopresbyter Anatoly Rakovich and Archpriest Ioann Geit the right to wear the Patriarchal Cross in acknowledgement of their work to help restore the archdiocese's unity with the Russian Orthodox Church.

During the Prayer of Fervent Supplication, petitions were voiced for the unity of the Orthodox Church and safeguarding the Church against divisions and schisms.

During the litany, prayers were lifted up for the repose of the soul of the Most Reverend Metropolitan Eulogius (Georgievsky) of eternal memory.

The sermon was delivered by Father Yevgeny Dubovets of the church of the Nativity of St. John the Precursor in Ivanovskoye, Moscow Region.

After the liturgy, His Holiness Kirill addressed the congregation delivering a primatial homily. He also presented the archdiocese with a shrine with honourable relics of St. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, and an icon of New Martyrs and Confessors of the Russian Church, who were members of the 1917-1918 Local Council, saying in particular, 'As is known, its resolution had a special importance for the life of the Russian Church's part in Western Europe headed by a participant in that historic Council – Metropolitan Eulogius of eternal memory, for the repose of whose soul we have prayed together today. May these gifts of the Mother Church become a sign of spiritual continuity and inviolable bond the resumption of which we are celebrating today'.

His Holiness presented Metropolitan Ioann with a commemorative pectoral icon and a cross, saying, 'Please accept them as an evidence of love with which you as a native of France is accepted by the great and truly multinational Russian Orthodox Church'.

Metropolitan Ioann made a speech in response and presented the Primate of the Russian Church with a pre-Revolution icon of the Saviour from the sacristy of the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Paris.

Then Patriarch Kirill presented church awards to Metropolitan Anthony of Chersonnesus and Western Europe, Patriarchate Exarch for Western Europe; Metropolitan Savva of Zelenograd, deputy chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, and Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, vice-chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, in acknowledgement of their work for the restoration of the Archdiocese of Western European Parishes of Russian Tradition's unity with the Russian Orthodox Church.

His Holiness Kirill addressed the participants in the service with closing remarks pointing to the importance of overcoming the last church division generated by civic disorders in the early 20th century in Russia and congratulated the faithful on this historic event.

*Patriarchal Press Service*

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