



DECR chairman sends greetings to participants in 27th International Conference on Orthodox Spirituality that began its work in Bose, Italy

On 4th September 2019, the 27th International Conference on Orthodox Spirituality entitled “Called to Life in Christ” began its work at the Monastery of Bose, Italy, bringing together high representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England and the Protestant communities, as well as prominent theologians and church historians.

With the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, a delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church led by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, took part in the conference. Metropolitan Hilarion was one of the keynote speakers.

The DECR chairman also sent a message of greetings to the organizers and participants in the conference. The text of the message is given below.

The Very Rev. Fr. Enzo Bianchi,

Dear organizers and participants in the conference,

On behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia I cordially greet all the participants in the 27th International Conference on Orthodox Spirituality organized by the Monastic Community of Bose and entitled “Called to Life in Christ.”

The Son of God, the Saviour of the World, through His incarnation, sacrifice on the cross and resurrection laid the foundation of new life, partaking of which are all those who believed in Him. According to St. Paul, in “new Adam” humanity is healed of the plague of sin and gains admittance to the Kingdom of God: “The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly” (1 Cor. 15:47-48). Bearing witness to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, sent down by Christ upon His disciples, St. Paul writes in the Epistle to the Galatians: “Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Gal. 2:20).

A Christian is becoming a new creature in Christ (cf. Gal. 6:15) by the grace of God, but not without

his/her personal efforts. The “synergy” between the Divine nature and the human nature is realized within the Church of Christ as the theanthropic organism, and for that reason it was called “life in Christ” by the holy fathers. It is not fortuitous that some outstanding Christian zealots gave such name to their mystagogical or ascetic writings. Suffice is to recall a remarkable work *The Life in Christ* by St. Nicholas Cabasilas or the spiritual diary *My Life in Christ* by the Holy Righteous John of Kronstadt.

Always relevant, the call for renewal of the world’s life in Christ becomes particularly urgent in some historical epochs. Among such epochs is our time – a time of division between Christians, conflicts between peoples, acute social injustice and global environmental crisis. In the Joint Declaration signed by Pope Francis and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia at the result of their historic meeting in Havana on 12th February 2016, the Primates of the two largest Christian Churches once again reminded all Christians about their vocation to live in Christ, in Whom every division is overcome, every wound inflicted by enmity and misunderstanding is healed and unity in love is achieved: “Christ is the well-spring of joy and hope. Faith in Him transfigures human life, fills it with meaning. This is the conviction borne of the experience of all those to whom Peter refers in his words: ‘Once you were ‘no people’ but now you are God’s people; you ‘had not received mercy’ but now you have received mercy’ (1 Pet 2:10)” (Par. 29). Noting the need for Catholics and Orthodox to join their efforts to proclaim the Gospel of salvation, the Pope and the Patriarch state: “This world, in which the spiritual pillars of human existence are progressively disappearing, awaits from us a compelling Christian witness in all spheres of personal and social life. Much of the future of humanity will depend on our capacity to give shared witness to the Spirit of truth in these difficult times” (Par. 28).

It is my wish that this conference, which brings together representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches, the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant communities, may with renewed energy remind us about our shared Christian vocation and the necessity to work together to preach the Gospel of Christ to the modern-day world.

I wish you fruitful work and invoke upon you God’s blessing.

With love in the Lord,

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk

Chairman

Department for External Church Relations

Moscow Patriarchate