



## **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill chairs session of the Holy Synod at Valaam Monastery**

On July 8-11, 2019, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia visited the Transfiguration of the Saviour stauropegic monastery on Valaam.

On July 9, a regular session of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, chaired by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, took place at the Church of Grand Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles at St. Vladimir scete.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church opened the session and addressed the members of the Holy Synod, saying:

‘Your Eminences and Graces! Dear brothers!

I cordially greet you at the Transfiguration of the Saviour stauropegic monastery on Valaam. Valaam is a holy place marked by the exploits of many generations of monks. This is our Russian Athos, though unlike Mount Athos it is bounded by very cold waters of Lake Ladoga, creating special conditions for ascetic life here. While visiting Valaam we see this miracle made by the power of the human spirit without any physical, political or economic forces. The life of this holy abode founded by several hermits was not easy, yet we see these magnificent churches built by people motivated by deep faith and faithfulness to the Lord. Valaam has become the Russian Northern Athos.

I am convinced that even more pilgrims will visit this holy place. One cannot remain indifferent to what one sees, hears and feels, to the spiritual power of the deeds performed here during centuries. It is indeed proper to hold here a session of the supreme body of the church authority – the Holy Synod. My heartfelt greetings!’

His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine; Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna; Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and All Moldova; Metropolitan Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan, head of the metropolitan area in the Republic of Kazakhstan; Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Uzbekistan, head of the metropolitan area in Central Asia; Metropolitan Varsonofy of St.

Petersburg and Ladoga; Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Zaslavl, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus; Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, and Metropolitan Savva of Tver and Kashin, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, are permanent members of the Holy Synod.

Invited to the summer session (March-August) are Metropolitan Antony of Korsun and Western Europe; Archishop Serafim of Kaliningrad and Baltyisk; Archbishop Roman of Yakutsk and Lensk; Bishop Leonid of Turov and Mozyr; and Bishop German of Sochi and Tuapse.

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