Reception devoted to 1030th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus' at Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow

On July 28, 2018, a reception on the occasion of the 1030th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus' took place at the Cathedral Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow.

Present at the reception were His Beatitude Theodoros II, Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, members of the Holy Synod and leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church synodal departments, the Moscow Patriarchate episcopate and clergy, members of the anniversary organizing committee, delegations of Local Orthodox Church, state officials and public figures.

Among the speakers were Metropolitan Hilarion, head of the Department for External Church Relations, Metropolitan George of Paphos (Orthodox Church of Cyprus), Mr. I. Schegolev, presidential envoy to the Central Federal Region, and Mr. Gavrilov, chairman of the State Duma committee for the development of civil society and for public and religious associations.

Addressing the gathering, Patriarch Kirill said, 'I would like to thank Your Beatitude Theodoros and all my dear brothers, representatives of Local Orthodox Churches, for today's liturgy and for the fellowship we have enjoyed these days.

'I believe that common prayers at God's altar have a great spiritual importance for us all. Of course, it is very important for us to meet and discuss various issues and problems. But when we together celebrate the Eucharist at the holy altar, what takes place does not happen at any assembly devoted to a discussion on a particular problem, as different points of view and even existing differences are obliterated. And we really stand before God as one people. I would also like to say that we are one people. On the day of the 1030th anniversary since the baptism of Prince Vladimir, I believe that each of us has felt it.

'Unfortunately, we sometimes need interpreters; we need some procedures to negotiate various points of view on particular problems. But all this are secondary matters. What is the primary matter is that we are one Church and one people. I believe it is very important to educate our flock for this awareness.

'Today we live in a new era – an era of the globalizing world and globalizing society, and some may

have an illusion that there are other reasons for community apart from faith, such as political unions, military unions, dependence of some mighty centers of financial power in the world. But all this is an illusion. On this level, there can never be a genuine unity. A genuine unity is there where we partake of the same Cup. For me, today's liturgy in the Kremlin together with all of you has been a powerful spiritual experience. I very strongly felt this community before the face of God and our responsibility before God for our nations, for our people.

'The time has come for us to strengthen our unity and not let any political forces try to divide us. I believe that this unity will be there to the end of time. I believe that no forces of evil will destroy it'.

Patriarchal Press Service

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Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/47280/