His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria and His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrated a prayer service at the monument to Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles



On 28 July 2018, the commemoration day of the Grand Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles, the Divine liturgy was celebrated at the Cathedral Square in the Moscow Kremlin to mark the 1030th anniversary of the Baptism of Russia. After the liturgy, a Procession of the Cross went to the monument to the Baptizer of Russia at the Borovitskaya Square.

The procession was led by His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria and All Africa and His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation took part in the procession.

The Primates of both Churches officiated at a prayer service to Prince Vladimir at the monument to him.

Liturgical hymns, including the troparions to the Life-Giving Trinity, to All Saints who shone forth in the land of Russia, the Baptism of Russia, to the Grand Prince Vladimir, were sung by the choir of clerics from the Moscow region conducted by the Rev. Sergy Golev.

At the Litany of Fervent Supplication petitions were offered for His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, the President of our country Vladimir, and the prosperity of the Holy Church.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill read a prayer to Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles. 'Many Years was proclaimed to Patriarch Theodoros, Patriarch Kirill, President Vladimir, the authorities, the army and the people of Russia, and all Orthodox Christians.

After the prayer service the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church addressed the worshippers, saying: "We have gathered today at the monument to the Baptizer of Russia to recall the event which happened over one thousand years ago and has determined the course of history for the Slavic people. Today we honour Prince Vladimir whose choice has changed not only the Slavic, but also Christian civilization."

His Holiness explained the change of the sinful Vladimir after baptism by the contrition of his heart which responded to the good tidings and his wish to live by the Gospel and continued to say: "Having been illuminated and transformed by divine grace, Vladimir wished his people to share with him the joy of life in Christ and the light of the Gospel truth to shine in the Russian land. Churches began to be built everywhere and schools were opened for young people.

"Culture and education are closely linked with the attraction of our forefathers to the Christian tradition. Baptism in the Dnieper River has begun a new stage in their spiritual, moral and cultural formation. As is said in the Message of the Holy Synod read at the Liturgy today, the choice of religion was also a choice of the mode of life and the style of culture. Orthodox spiritual and moral values have shaped the national character of our people, such as courage and self-sacrifice, honesty and tender conscience, compassion and the strong sense of justice. The Christian tradition has become the basis of secular culture, including literature, painting, music and architecture.

"The Day of Baptism is celebrated today in Moscow, Kiev, Minsk and other cities. Millions of people offer up their prayers to the Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince for prosperity and peace in the countries of historical Russia.

"We are inspired and encouraged by the example of the holy Baptizer of Russia and are called to follow him in his striving for unity and accord. May the Merciful Lord through the prayers of Prince Vladimir bestow wellbeing upon people of historical Russia, put them on the way of righteousness and renew

their strength so that they can follow Christ.

As we commemorate Grand Prince Vladimir, we pray for our President Vladimir Putin named after him. There are no fortuities in history; it especially concern those people whose activity changes the world. On behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church I congratulate you, dear Vladimir Vladimirovich on you Nameday and wish you God's aid in your work and spiritual and physical strength. May the Lord keep you."

Russian President greeted the participants, saying that the Baptism of Russia was a crucial turning point in our history, an event of the transforming spiritual strength which has determined the centuries-long way of Russia, influenced the developments in the world. The Baptism of Russia has brought about the formation and development of the Russian statehood, a real spiritual birth of our predecessors, their identity and the golden age of culture and education as well as the development of relations of various kinds with other countries.

A festival of the Orthodox choir music followed.

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