Patriarch Kirill meets with Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama

Taking part in the meeting from the Russian Orthodox Church were also Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), Archbishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate administrative secretariat, Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman, Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations, and Rev. Alexander Volkov, head of the Patriarchal press service. From the Albanian Orthodox Church there were Metropolitan Ignatios of Berat and Metropolitan Joan of Corce.

Among those present was also Russian Ambassador to Albania A. Karpushin.

Participating in the meeting were also Minister of Culture Ms.Mirela Kumbaro and Minister for Diaspora Pandeli Majko.

In the course of the talk, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill noted that many good changes took place in the life of Albania and in its capital city in recent years. A great contribution to it was made in particular by Mr. Edi Rama who had been the mayor of Tirana for eleven years.

Speaking about the challenge of extremism which the modern society seeks to meet, His Holiness stated that terrorist actions and extremist manifestations are often falsely motivated by religion. For this very reason, interreligious dialogue constitutes a decisive factor in peace efforts and in opposing terrorism.

Speaking about the experience of interreligious cooperation in the Russian Federation and, in particular, the work of the Interreligious Council in Russia, Patriarch Kirill noted with satisfaction that a similar council functions in Albania as well and that good relations between the leaders of various religious communities have prevailed in the country. ‘The success of a state depends largely on how consolidated the society is’, His Holiness said. In this connection, he underscored the role played by His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios in the development of interreligious cooperation, so important for rallying the Albanian society.

Addressing the topic of the revival of church life in Albania in which, after the 1968 Albanian Constitution declared the country an atheistic state, all the religious communities were in fact destroyed, Patriarch Kirill pointed to the importance of the construction of the Cathedral of the Resurrection in Tirana in 2012 with direct participation of Archbishop Anastasios.

The prime minister of Albania, on his part, stated that ‘Archbishop Anastasios revived religious life in our country, which had turned into an absolute hell before.

Mr. Edi Rama stressed that a peaceful fraternal co-existence of various communities and religions was a main value in Albania.

DECR Communication Service

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