

Orthodox Autocephalous Albanian Church, restored on the only solid foundation, which is Christ, continues developing in the rays of Paschal light.

'With the feelings of heartfelt fraternal love and profound respect we meet you today, Holy Brother Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and from the bottom of our hearts wish that, through the interception of St. Cyril whose name you bear, you may continue your church service relying on his God-moved wisdom and dreams. May God glorified in the Trinity grant you many years of life, good health, ardent faith and the Cross-Resurrection way of thinking so that, led by the Holy Spirit, you may lead the devout Russian people to constant spiritual bearing fruits, radiating the light of the Cross and Resurrection in today's era', the Primate of the Albanian Church said in conclusion.

Patriarch Kirill spoke in response, saying,

'Your Beatitude, beloved fellow-archpastors, honorable fathers, dear brothers and sisters,

Christ Is Risen!

'Thank you, Your Beatitude and the Holy Synod of the Albanian Orthodox Church for the kind greeting and invitation to visit the Albanian land.

'Here, in a country of old Christian heritage tracing back to the works of St. Paul, in a country in which the Holy Martyr Astius the Bishop of Dyrrhachium, the Holy Martyr John of Albania and many other men of God performed their feats, in which the outstanding missionary St. Cosmas of Aetolia worked, the atmosphere of the feast of the glorious Resurrection of the Lord, God and our Saviour Jesus Christ is felt with special profundity. And this magnificent cathedral, a visible symbol of the resurrection of the Albanian Orthodox Church is dedicated, too, to the Resurrection of Christ.

The triumph of the Resurrection was preceded by Golgotha. In the 20th century, both of our Churches had an experience of partaking in the suffering of Christ as churches were destroyed, shrines were trampled upon, and numerous clergy, monastics and laity endured suffering and suffered martyrdom in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The enemy of our salvation thus hoped to sow spiritual death among the peoples nourished by our Churches, but contrary to the expectations of persecutors, the faith resurrected and came back to life, for the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christianity.

'The Lord sent forth his mercy and his truth (cf. Ps. 56:4), and the Albanian Orthodox Church, fully destroyed previously, has risen in new glory, asserted through the selfless primatial efforts of Your Beatitude.

'I have come here with bright hopes. We cherish the present opportunity to share with you the joy of the Holy Pascha of Christ, to be comforted together with you by the mutual faith (cf. Rom. 1:12) and to venerate the shrines of the Albanian land. I hope that, God willing, my visit of peace will open a new page in the relations between our Local Orthodox Sister Churches.'

After the service, the Primate of the Russian and Albanian Churches inspected the Chapel of the Nativity of Christ, a part of the cathedral church compound.

DECR Communication Service

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