Primates of Russian and Bulgarian Orthodox Churches celebrate Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky in Sofia



On 4 March 2018, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Holiness Patriarch Neophyte of Bulgaria celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky in Sofia.

Concelebrating with the Primates of the Russian and the Bulgarian Orthodox Churches were an assembly of hierarchs and clergy of the Bulgarian Church, members of the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the representative of the Romanian Orthodox Church to the Bulgarian Patriarchal Throne.

Among those who prayed at the service was the head of the Bulgarian Royal House, Simeon II Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

After the Liturgy, His Holiness Patriarch Neophyte delivered a homily. The Primate of the Bulgarian Church thanked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia for the joy of celebrating together the 140th anniversary of the liberation of Bulgaria from the centuries-old yoke. As Patriarch Neophyte noted, the presence of the Primate of the Russian Church and all the guests from Russia once again demonstrated the strong and unflagging spiritual ties between the two Orthodox peoples and Churches.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill also addressed the Primate of the Bulgarian Church and all the worshippers, saying in particular:

“To commemorate the end of the war that 140 years ago brought liberation to the Bulgarian people, the following Psalm verse was stamped on the Russian medals: “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name” (Ps 115:1). This is a humble acceptance of the will of God and an acknowledgement of the Divine miracle in the events of the war and of God’s help which made up for human infirmity.

“The sacred Bulgarian land reddened with the blood of many thousands of the Bulgarian militiamen. For the freedom of their brothers in faith, tens of thousands of the Russian soldiers shed their blood here, having died at Plevna, Plovdiv, Sheinovo and Shipka 140 years ago, when our peoples were fighting side by side for the independence, for the salvation of Bulgaria.

“That victory had a spiritual meaning of triumph over earthly evil and injustice. It was granted to our peoples according to their faith: in reward for the selfless courage of the Russian soldiers and in response to the prayers and sufferings of countless Bulgarian new martyrs, holy intercessors for their homeland. And this wonderful Church of the Holy Prince Alexander Nevsky, built through the joint efforts of our ancestors, clearly shows that their labours and heroic deeds perfomed in the period of hardships for Bulgaria were not futile, but bore the fruit of the faith Christ to their descendants.

“I wholeheartedly congratulate Your Holiness on the 5th anniversary of enthronement and prayerfully wish that the Lord grant unto you good health and His almighty help in your lofty ministry. May the Lord bless the Holy Bulgarian Church and bestow His mercies upon her people!”

DECR Communication Service

Photo by Press Service of Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

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