Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church adopts its final documents

On 2 December 2017, on the concluding day of its work, the Sacred Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church adopted its resolutions and the message. The draft documents were presented to the participants in the Council by Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Zaslavl, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus.

To conclude the session, His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine addressed His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, saying, "Your Holiness, on behalf of all the participants in the Sacred Bishops' Council I express to you our profound gratitude for your work as its chairman and our brother in Christ… I believe that the decisions taken by the Council with the best of intentions will bring forth good fruit for the faithful of our Church, for all those who want to attain salvation and the eternal life."

To commemorate the centenary of the restoration of Patriarchate in the Russian Orthodox Church, His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry, on behalf of all the archpastors who took part in the Council, presented His Holiness Patriarch Kirill with a cross and two panagias. "These are replicas of the cross and the panagias that were once laid upon your predecessor, His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon, glorified among the saints," Metropolitan Onufry said.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church expressed his gratitude to the Presidium and all the members of the Bishops' Council, saying, "I would like to thank by name those who presented the reports: His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry, Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna, Metropolitan Varsonofy of St. Petersburg and Ladoga, Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Zaslavl, chairman of the Drafting Commission, and his team, all the members of the drafting group. They promptly, in rather difficult circumstances, for there is always little time in such cases, prepared the texts that formed the basis for our decisions. I would like to thank Metropolitan Mark of Ryazan and Mikhailov, Metropolitan Georgy of Nizhny Novgorod and Arzamas, Archbishop Mark of Berlin and Germany, Bishop Pankraty of Troitsk, and Bishop Tikhon of Yegorievsk. We are also grateful to all those who took part in the organization of the Bishops' Council – members of the Organizing Committee, consultants, as well as those who provided environment for our work, who took the minutes of the meetings and gave media coverage. I thank all of you, dear Vladykas, especially those who presented the reports, for our joint fruitful work. May God help us so that our decisions, which we took for the glory of God and for the strengthening of the unity of our Church, be implemented, so that our ministry might truly leave its mark in the life of the peoples, attracting to Christ those who are still on their way and strengthening those who are good and faithful children of our Church."

That same day, a grand meeting of the Council will be held. Among those taking part in it will be the Primates and delegations of the Local Orthodox Churches.

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During its work, the Sacred Bishops' Council discussed and adopted the Provision for Monasteries and Monastics, the resolutions 'On the Church-Wide Glorification of a Number of Locally Venerated Saints,' 'On the Introduction of Amendments and Additions to the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church and Other Documents of the Russian Orthodox Church,' 'On the Election of Members of the General Ecclesiastical Court of the Russian Orthodox Church,' 'On the Appeal of the Former Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev and All Ukraine,' as well as the document 'On the Canonical Aspects of Church Marriage,' the new edition of the Provision for Awards of the Russian Orthodox Church, and other resolutions and the Message to the Clergy, Monastics and All the Faithful of the Russian Orthodox Church.

In response to the greetings sent to the Council by the leaders of several states, the Bishops' Council sent messages to the President of Russia Vladimir Putin, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, President of Moldova Igor Dodon, and President of Kazakhsatn Nursultan Nazarbayev.

On the first day of the Council's work, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill delivered an address, in which he focused on various spheres of the life of the Russian Orthodox Church and presented the statistics, according to which the Russian Church has 303 dioceses, which is 10 more than in 2016 and 144 more than in 2009. Three metropolias were established in the inter-Council period. Now their total number is 60.

The episcopate of the Russian Orthodox Church consists of 377 hierarchs, which is 23 more than of 1 February 2016, and 177 more than in the beginning of 2009. There are 293 ruling archpastors now, which is 11 more than in the beginning of 2016 and 144 more than in 2009. At present the Russian Orthodox Church has 39 414 clerics, including 34 774 presbyters and 4 640 deacons. For the past year, the number of clerics has increased by 521 people.

The Russian Orthodox Church has 36 878 churches and other buildings wherein the Divine Liturgy is celebrated, as well as 462 monasteries, which is 7 more than in the previous year, and 482 convents, which is 11 more than in the previous year.

Over 900 parishes and monasteries of the Russian Orthodox Church, including parishes of the

Russian Church Abroad, carry out their activities in the far-abroad countries.

Bishops' Council Information Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/47915/