Opening of the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church



November 29, 2017 – After the Divine Liturgy and a thanksgiving at the relics of St. Tikhon the Patriarch of Moscow, the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church has begun its first plenary session at the Church Councils Hall of the Cathedral Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. It is chaired by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

The council is attended by archpastors of the Moscow Patriarchate from Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia, Moldavia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizia, Latvia, Lithuania, Tajikistan, Turkmenia, Uzbekistan, Estonia and far-abroad countries in which there exist dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church.

According to the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Bishops' Council is chaired by the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

The Council presidium includes the permanent members of the Holy Synod: His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine, Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna, Metropolitan Vladimir

and Kishinev and All Moldova, Metropolitan Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan, Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Uzbekistan, Metropolitan Varsonofy of St. Petersburg and Ladoga, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; Metropolitan Pavel of Zaslavsk, Patriarchal Exarch for All Belarus; and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations.

The membership of the presidium also includes the Most Reverend archpastors invited to participate in the winter session of the Holy Synod: Metropolitan Ioasaf of Kirovograd and Novomirgorod, Bishop Seraphim of Bobruisk and Bykhov; Bishop Feofan of Kyzyl and Tyva; Bishop Feognost of Novorossijsk and Gelendzhik; Bishop Mitrofan of Severomorsk and Umba.

In addition, in keeping with the Holy Synod Decision of November 28, 2017 (Minutes No. 104), considering the importance of participation of the primates of autonomous and self-governed parts of the Moscow Patriarchate in guiding the work of the Bishops' Council, the Holy Synod membership for the time of the Council's work and the Council's presidium includes Metropolitan Daniel of Tokyo and Japan, Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York, Metropolitan Alexander of Riga and All Latvia, and Metropolitan Cornelius of Tallinn and All Estonia.

Patriarch Kirill made some remarks on the Council's rules of procedure items and announced the agenda of the Council.

The council members adopted the rules of procedure and agenda and approved the membership of the credentials, drafting and counting commissions.

Metropolitan Varsonofy of St. Petersburg and Ladoga was elected as secretary of the Bishops' Council. According to the statute, the secretary is 'responsible for providing the Council with all the necessary working papers and for taking minutes'.

Archbishop Mark of Berlin and Germany has been elected as chairman of the credentials commission; Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Zaslavsk as chairman of the drafting commission; and Metropolitan Mitrofan of Gorlovka and Slavyansk as chairman of the counting commission.

Patriarch Kirill also introduced the group of assistants and advisers.

The chairman of the drafting commission, Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Zaslavsk, read out the messages of greetings sent to the Bishops' Council by Russian President V. Putin, Byelorussian President A. Lukashenko, Moldavian President I. Dodon, and Kazakhstan President N. Nazarbayev.

The key report on the life and work of the Russian Church will be done by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

Patriarchal Press Service

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