Patriarch Kirill presides over Supreme Church Council meeting



November 23, 2017 – The Supreme Church Council of the Russian Orthodox Church has begun its meeting at the Church of Christ the Savour. It is chaired by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

His Holiness addressed the meeting, saying,

> ‘I greet all the members of the Supreme Church Council.
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> This year the centenary of the tragic events of 1917 is a theme going through all our reflections... We seek to grasp what happened one hundred years ago. Recently we prayed at the Donskoy Monastery, in which His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon was elected to the Patriarchate throne on November 18, 1917. And already a century ago these days the Church, as is known, began to

be attacked. On November 13, before His Holiness Tikhon was elected, the holy martyr Ioann Kochurov was murdered. Then the blood of many new martyrs was spilt, who are now glorified as saints. Beginning from the Church's glorification to academic conferences, films and exhibitions – all this has special importance for preserving the historical memory of the tragic events in those days.

It is important that the centenary of the revolution has been marked by opening of new monuments. In Moscow, for instance, two memorials have been opened – Memorial Garden at the Butovo firing range and The Wall of Sorrow at the crossroads between Sakharov Prospect and Gardens Ring. To great regret, the opening of the Memorial Garden has not been given proper attention by the public and mass media in spite of the fact that the memorial is not located as some nominal place but in the place where people were executed by shooting, where their remains lie. That is why I regret very much that the opening of this memorial went unnoticed by many mass media outlets.

But what is the meaning of all these memorials? Perhaps, in the first place these memorials are called to be a visible reminder of the past so that nothing like it could happen in the future. A memorial cannot be just a stone graven image; people should come to them and warm up the cold stones with their remembrances and reflections.

For the Church the most important thing in the events of the 20th century is the feat of new martyrs. For us, coming to memorial devoted to the victims of repression is a food for prayer. Each Orthodox person, coming to such monuments, is called to pray to the new martyrs, for prayer is a reminder that for God all are alive, that the Lord has conquered death by His Resurrection and that there is the principal Judge and highest Judgement and no one will escape His justice.

God grant that the remembrance of those tragic events so profoundly touching all of us in this centenary year will also become part of our view of history, our understanding of the past and help us, first of all pastors, to address their flocks in such a way that may cultivate in people the categorical rejection of revolutions, civic conflicts, mutinies, repressions and all that undermines people's life and throws the country back into the past. The year of remembrance of the centenary-old events should lead us all to a positive result, to a certain understanding of what people should not do in any time and in any conditions and what lessons should be learnt even from the most tragic pages of our history'.

The agenda of the meeting includes the implementation of the decisions made by the Supreme Church Council and the Bishops' Council.

The membership of the Supreme Church Council is as follows:

- Metropolitan Varsonofiy of St. Petersburg and Ladoga, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate;
- Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate;
- Metropolitan Clement of Kaluga and Borovsk; chairman of the ROC Publishing Council;
- Metropolitan Arseniy of Istra, firs vicar of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia for Moscow;
- Metropolitan Ioann of Belgorod and Stariy Oskol, head of the Synod Mission Department;
- Metropolitan Merkuriy of Rostov and Novocherkassk, head of the Synodal Department for Religious Education and Catechism;
- Metropolitan Mark of Ryazan and Mikhalovsk, head of the Financial and Economic Administration of the Moscow Patriarchate;
- Metropolitan Kirill of Stavropol and Nevinnomyssk, chairman of the Synodal Committee for Cooperation with the Cossacks;
- Archbishop Yevgeniy of Vereya, chairman of the Education Committee under the Holy Synod;
- Archbishop Feognost of Sergiev Posad, head of the Synodal Department for Monasteries and Monkhood;
- Archbishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, director of the Administrative Secretariat of the Moscow Patriarchate;
- Bishop Irinarkh of Krasnogorsk, head of the Synodal Department for Service in Prisons;
- Bishop Panteleimon of Orekhovo-Zuevo, head of the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Service;
- Bishop Tikhon of Yegoryevsk, chairman of the Patriarchal Council for Culture;
- Bishop Antoniy of Zvenigorod, director of the Moscow Patriarchate office for institutions abroad;
- Bishop Serafim of Lyubertsy, head of the Synodal Department for Youth;
- Archpriest Sergiy Privalov, head of the Synodal Department for Cooperation with the Armed Forces and Law Enforcement;
- Archpriest Dimitry Smirnov, chairman of the Patriarchal commission for the family, motherhood and childhood;
- Legoida, head of the Synodal Department for the Church’s Relations with Society and Mass Media.

The following persons were invited to attend the meeting: Bishop Savva of Voskresensk, first deputy chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; Bishop Nikolay of Balashikha, editor-in-chief of the Moscow Patriarchate Publishers; Archpriest Maxim Kozlov, first deputy head of the ROC education committee; Archimandrite Savva (Tutunov), deputy chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; Sister Xenia (Chernega), director of the Moscow Patriarchate legal service; A. Schipkov, first deputy head of the Synodal Department for the Church’s Cooperation with Society and Mass Media;

Patriarchal Press Service

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