On Assumption Day and anniversary of opening of 1917-1918 Local Council, Patriarch Kirill celebrated liturgy at Kremlin Cathedral of the Assumption



On August 28, 2017, the Day of the Assumption of the Most Holy Mary, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the patriarchal Cathedral of the Assumption in the Moscow Kremlin.

August 28 also marks the centenary of the opening of the 1917-1918 Sacred Council of the Russian Orthodox Church that restored the patriarchal office. With the blessing of Patriarch Kirill and in accordance with the Holy Synod decision, praise was sung on this day in all churches of the Russian Orthodox Church for the canonized members and of the Sacred Council and commemoration prayers were said for other members of the Sacred Council, which opened in 1917 on the Day of the Assumption of the Most Holy Mother of God.

His Holiness was assisted by a great assembly of bishops and priests, including representatives of

Local Orthodox Churches to the Moscow Patriarchate from the Orthodox Churches of Alexandria, Antioch, Serbia, Bulgaria and the Czech Lands and Slovakia.

Present at the service were participants in the 3d Summer Theological Institute for Catholic priests from Italy.

The patriarchal service was broadcast live by the Soyuz TV channel.

The Prayer of Fervent Supplication included petitions with regard to the centenary of the Sacred Council:

After the litany, Patriarch Kirill lifted up a prayer for peace in Ukraine followed by a prayer for 'the repose of the souls of the faithful servants of God, members of the Sacred Council of our Church, archpastors, pastors, monastics and laity, as many of them, in the years of persecutions for their Orthodox faith, endured terrible ordeals and torture and martyred in prisons and died of excruciating toil in exile'.

Before communion, Archbishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk read out a message of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia on the centenary of the 1917-1918 Local Council.

After the liturgy, praise to the Mother of God and exaltation to the holy members of the Local Council were sung.

Patriarch Kirill delivered a primatial homily, presented church awards, greeted the faithful on the occasion of the feast and thanked them for common prayer.

'I would like to give special thanks to the combined choir of the Moscow city diocese. Today, our ears were charmed by 350 singers from all over Moscow. I thank the organizers and choir conductors, and may God give us not to lose this remarkable tradition to celebrate on special days to the accompaniment of the Moscow combined diocesan choir. May the Lord preserve you all!'

During the festive repast that took place on that day at the Church of Christ the Saviour, Metropolitan Niphon of Philippople, addressed Patriarch Kirill on behalf of the representatives of Local Orthodox Churches to the Moscow Patriarchal See:

'Your Holiness, on behalf of the representatives of Local Orthodox Churches I would like to testify that we are celebrating today a significant anniversary that influenced not only the history of the Russian Church but also the history of entire Orthodoxy.

‘The Patriarchal Office is not a special Orthodox dogma but an indication of a special maturity of a Church. The Russian Church grew in its holiness and was rightly ranked among the old apostolic Churches. For this reason the restoration of Patriarchal Office in it was welcomed by the whole Orthodox world.

‘Especially in the years of hard trials the election of Patriarch became such an important event that it even acquired a somewhat different meaning from what it had before. In the 16th century, having been granted autocephaly, the Russian Orthodox Church became an equal Sister Church demonstrating its independence, and in the 20th century the election of a Patriarch, on the contrary, brought the Russian Church together with other Local Churches, thus strengthening fraternal ties and helping to support the people in the years of church persecution.

“The Patriarch is a Church’s summit towering over the local fold, seeing other summits and visible to them”, as Archpriest Sergiy Bulgakov said.

‘Your Holiness, today the whole Orthodox world is looking at this summit of the Holy Russian Church in your person, seeing in you an outstanding Christian leader not only in Russia but also in the whole world. The authority that a Patriarch exercises is certainly linked first of all with his very rank, but how gratifying it is when this authority is heightened by the bright charismatic personality of a Primate.

In the early 20th century, future holy martyr Metropolitan Mitrofan (Krasnopolsky) uttered words very topical for our time. He said that a Patriarch is needed “as a spiritual head and leader who would inspire the heart of the Russian people and call them to a better life and to a feat and would himself walk in advance”.

‘We congratulate the Russian Church on the centenary of the restoration of Patriarchal Office and rejoice together with her in the fact that she has such a head and leader! Rejoice, the Orthodox world, that today the boat of the Russian Church, after enduring the terrible years of persecution and now led by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, is a buttress for us all!’

Patriarchal Press Service

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