Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church completes its session in St. Petersburg



July 29, 2017, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, chaired by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, completed its session at the building of the Most Holy Governing Synod in St. Petersburg.

In a break, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Holy Synod members lifted up prayers for the repose of the soul of the deceased Archbishop Nikolay who died on June 17, 2017.

After the session, Patriarch Kirill presented church awards. Metropolitan Alexander of Kazakhstan and Astana, head of the Metropolitan Region of Kazakhstan, was awarded the Order of St. Innocent, Metropolitan of Moscow and Kolomna (Class I), in recognition of this zealous archpastoral work and on the occasion of his 60th birthday. Bishop Ioann of Caracas was awarded the Order of St. Sergius of Radonezh (Class III) in recognition of his zealous archpastoral work and on the occasion of this 60th birthday and 30th anniversary of his episcopal ministry.

The head of the Synodal Department for the Church's Relations with Society and the Mass Media, V. Legoida, told us about major decisions adopted by the Holy Synod that day.

Opening the session, Patriarch Kirill, in his introductory remarks, reminded the session that July 29, 2017 marks the 90th anniversary of Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky)'s signing the declaration on church-state relations.

'Metropolitan Sergius took that step without violating by any means either the dogmata or canons. His did it to create prerequisites for possible development of relations with the state and for consolidating the situation of the Church in the then Soviet Union', he said, stressing that in spite of the signing of the declaration, the people, clergy and episcopate had to go through 'an epoch of terrible persecution'.

'It is the gravest page of our national history, the hardest page in the history of the Church. But perhaps thanks to the intercession of new martyrs and confessors, who remained faithful to Christ, did not waver in their faith and did not reject God and the Church that something good is happening in the life of the Church and in the life of our people. For this reason we remember today's date with gratitude to our fathers, grandfathers and all those who have upheld Orthodoxy in Russia and preserved the succession, including the apostolic, hierarchical succession in our Church', His Holiness said.

The Holy Synod heard Patriarch Kirill's report about the bringing of the honourable relics of St. Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, to Russia. As was noted, this event became possible thanks to the agreement reached during the meeting between Patriarch Kirill and Pope Francis on February 12, 2016, in Havana.

According to Mr. Legoida, 'during the stay of St. Nicholas's relics in Russia, the shrine was venerated by almost two and a half million believers from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and countries in the near and far abroad'.

Patriarch Kirill informed the Holy Synod about his visits to the dioceses of Kasimov, Vyatka, Tver, Novgorod and St. Petersburg in May, June and July, and about his visit to the Republic of Kazakhstan.

He also made a report about the work carried out by the Supreme Church Council in the first half of 2017, the work of the Inter-Council Presence and the completion of the 7th season of the Patriarchal Literature Award of Ss Cyril and Methodius Equal-to-the-Apostles.

As Mr. Legoida indicated, the Holy Synod considered and adopted documents on the procedure of the Russian Orthodox Church's recognition of secular diplomas of Candidate or Doctor of Theology as

equal to church diplomas of Candidate or Doctor of Theology, as well as normative documents concerning the training of precentors of church choirs.

‘The Holy Synod has relieved Bishop Antoniy of Bogorodsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate office for institutions abroad, from his duty as administrator of the Italian parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate, expressing to him gratitude for his work. The Synod also resolved that Bishop Antoniy be granted the title of Bishop of Zvenigorod’, Mr. Legoida related, adding, ‘the Holy Synod has elected Hegumen Feodorit (Tikhonov) , a cleric of the diocese of Skopin, as Bishop of Skopin and Shatsk.

Mr. Legoida stressed that to continue the work of breaking dioceses into smaller units, the Synod resolved that the diocese of Birsk be singled out of the diocese of Ufa, Salavat and Neftekamsk and included in the Metropolia of Bashkortostan.

‘Hieromonk Iliya (Kazantsev), a cleric of the diocese of Kazan, has been elected as Bishop of Birsk and Beloretsk. At the same time, the Synod decided that the ruling bishop of the diocese of Neftekamsk be granted the title of Bishop of Neftekamsk and Oktyabrsk’, Mr. Legoida said.

He also pointed out that Synod approved the texts of troparions, kontakions and praises to ‘the Holy Fathers of the Local Council of the Russian Church’ and recommended them for liturgical usage along with several liturgical texts including a new version of the akathistes to the Venerable Martyr Princess Elizabeth.

‘According to the procedure in force, the Synod confirmed the minutes of the Exarchate of Belarus, Metropolia of Kazakhstan and Metropolia of Central Asia’, concluded the head of the Department for the Church’s Relations with Society and Mass Media.

Synodal Department for the Church’s Relations with Society and the Mass Media

DECR Communication Service

Photos by Patriarchal Press Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/48304/