Patriarch Kirill meets with a delegation of the Roman Catholic Church in St. Petersburg



July 28, 2017 – His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with a delegation of the Roman Catholic Church who were to accompany the relics of St. Nicholas from St. Petersburg to Bari, at the Golden Hall of the Metropolitan's Chambers of the St. Alexander Nevsky Laura in St. Petersburg.

Participating in the meeting from the Roman Catholic side were Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Archbishop Francesco Cacucci of Bari-Bitonto, Rev. Ciro Capotosto, rector of the Pontifical Basilica of St. Nicholas in Bari, Rev. Hyacinthe Destivelle of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and Rev. Marco Cinquepalmi, director of the communication service of the Archdiocese of Bari.

The Russian Orthodox side was represented by Metropolitan Varsonofy of St. Petersburg and Ladoga, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations; Archbishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of

the Moscow Patriarchate administrative secretariat; Rev. Alexiy Dikarev of the department for external church relations.

Greeting the gathering, Patriarch Kirill thanked Cardinal Kurt Koch and members of the Italian delegation for having brought the shrine, as well as Metropolitan Hilarion and all those who worked from the Russian side.

His Holiness said that the faithful of the Russian Orthodox Church took with joy and inspiration the bringing of the relics of St. Nicholas. Among those who came to venerate the relics were the head of the state and representatives of all the social groups and strata of the population – 'the whole social section of population including politicians, scholars, art leaders, governors, people of various walks of life, young and old. Of course, for me as Patriarch it was a great consolation', he said.

Over 2,5 million people came to venerate the relics in Russia from May 21 to July 28.

'May the Lord, through the intercession of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker strengthen our nations and give them spiritual strength to live a Christian life in a world that refuses to be Christian', His Holiness concluded.

Cardinal Kurt Koch, in his turn, noted that he did not expect such a great number of pilgrims to come to the shrine. 'We did not think there would be so many people. It is an excellent sign that there is a living faith in people's hearts', he stated.

The Catholic prelate thanked His Holiness for cooperation, which he said 'became a St. Nicholas's real miracle'.

Patriarch Kirill asked him to convey the words of gratitude to Pope Francis of Rome, who, at the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia's request, made the decision to bring the relics to Russia.

In conclusion of the meeting an exchange of tokens took place. His Holiness presented Cardinal Kurt Koch with an icon of St. Nicholas. The guests presented His Holiness with a vessel with myrrh from the saint's relics.

Patriarchal Press Service
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