Primate of Russian Church leads celebrations in St. Petersburg on Baptism of Russia Feast Day



On 28 July 2017, the commemoration day of the Holy Prince Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles, and Feast Day of the Baptism of Russia, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, who had arrived in St. Petersburg the day before, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Trinity Cathedral of the Lavra of St. Alexander Nevsky, where the reliquary with a particle of the holy relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, had been placed for veneration.

The shrine, brought to the Russian Orthodox Church from Bari, was kept at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow from May 21 to July 13, and transferred to the Holy Trinity Cathedral of the Lavra of St. Alexander Nevsky in St. Petersburg on July 13. The relics left Russia for Bari on July 28.

Concelebrating the Liturgy with His Holiness was an assembly of hierarchs and clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Among those who attended the service were members of the delegation of the Roman Catholic Church

accompanying the relics of St. Nicholas from St. Petersburg to Bari: Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; Msgr. Francesco Cacucci, Archbishop 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. Carlo Cinquepalmi, director of the communication service of the Archdiocese of Bari-Bitonto.

The Feast Day of the Baptism of Russia was marked by special prayers said by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill during the Litany of Fervent Supplication:

Giving thanks with fear and trembling, as worthless servants, to Thy goodness, our Saviour and Master, O Lord, for Thy mercies that Thou has shed upon our land since its Baptism and to this day, we fall down before Thee and praise Thee as God, and cry unto Thee with contrition: deliver Thy people from all afflictions and always fulfill, as the Merciful One, our good supplications, we zealously pray unto Thee, hearken to us and have mercy on us.

Again we beseech Thee, Our Saviour, Who through the Right-Believing Prince Vladimir deigned to choose our people as Thine inheritance and in the font of Baptism to grant the Holy Spirit, protect our Holy Church from schisms and tribulations, and establish her in oneness of faith, and preserve her in peace. Hearken to us and have mercy on us.

Again we beseech Thee, O Lord Almighty, look down and strengthen this vineyard, which Thou with Thy right hand has planted and preserved from machinations of the enemies; and henceforth grant to Thine inheritance peace and tranquility; may the Holy Russia, which Thou has chosen as Thy dwelling place, neither diminish nor be shaken; glory be to Thy Thrice-Holy Name. Hearken to us and have mercy on us.

Thou Who has given us a commandment to love Thee, Our God, and our neighbor, vouchsafe that hatred, enmity, offence and all lawlessness may cease, and true love may reign in our hearts. We beseech Thee, Our Saviour, hearken to us and have mercy on us.

After the Litany of Fervent Supplication the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church said a prayer of thanksgiving for the Baptism of the Russian land and *for all the benefactions bestowed upon Russia to this day*. His Holiness also lifted up a prayer for peace in Ukraine.

After the Divine Liturgy, Patriarch Kirill delivered a Primatial homily.

On behalf of the clergy and laypeople of the St. Petersburg metropolia, Metropolitan Varsonofy of St. Petersburg and Ladoga greeted His Holiness with the commemoration day of the Holy Prince Vladimir,

Equal-to-the-Apostles, and with the Feast Day of the Baptism of Russia, and thanked him for giving the opportunity to the citizens of Russia's northern capital to venerate the holy relics of St. Nicholas. "Five hundred thirty-five thousand people have come to venerate them, and these people thank Your Holiness," Metropolitan Varsonofy said.

Patriarchal Press Service/

DECR Communication Service

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