



Patriarch Kirill presides over Supreme Church Council regular session



June 13, 2017 – the Supreme Church Council of the Russian Orthodox Church met at the Cathedral Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. It was chaired by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

Opening the session, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church addressed himself to the Supreme Council members with introductory remarks:

“Today we have quite a busy agenda and a great amount of work to do. For this reason, I will limit myself to brief introductory remarks.

Among the items we are to consider are, first, the level of implementation of the decisions we made earlier. We have to consider problems arising in the process of their implementation. I believe this part of our work to be very important, as it gives us an opportunity to work over the

items to be considered by the Supreme Church Council and bring them to realization on the scale of the whole Church.

Among other topics beyond the list we are to monitor, we will discuss the important issue of an educational standard for the choir conductors trained in our schools. Experience has shown that the training of choir conductors is of great importance not only for raising the level of church music in the whole country, but also for the educational and catechetical work of the Church.

When in 1978 I initiated a process of establishing a choir conductors school at Leningrad Theological Seminary, many wondered why theological disciplines were included in its curriculum. I remember the meeting of the Academic Council and the question I was asked: Why is it necessary to teach the history of the Church, the history of the Bible and dogmatic and moral theology? And I pronounced some words nobody understood – all smiled and took them as a joke. I said this: ‘When we will have opportunities for teaching religion to children, the only ones who will be able to do it are theologically trained choir conductors’. It was long before the perestroika; everybody laughed. But it happened precisely so – the first catechizers were our choir conductors who were taught theology, among other things.

Nowadays, the training of choir conductors has reached a new level. Of course, we should raise the level of their skills; choir conductors should become highly professional conductors. At the same time, we should think over how the formative work should be built at the conductors departments, because very often young girl conductors become wives of priests. It is also an important part of our common concern for the future of the Church. Before the conductors department appeared in what were Leningrad theological schools at that time, our young people met in the street. As a result the outcome of these acquaintances was catastrophic. And when a conductors department appeared, we began resolving this important church social task as well. There appeared strong church families. Visiting dioceses, I sometimes meet my former graduates and rejoice in the fact that they realized their ministry as wives of priests by creating lasting Christian families and becoming helpers to their husbands and wonderful mentors of their children.

When I speak about it, people often smile, but it is really a very important area of our common work involving the training of young people for the future service of the Church – both those who are ordained and those who, through marital bonds, are called to share with their husbands in responsible pastoral ministry.

Finally, I would like to say that many of those who are trained at choir conductors departments become teachers in our Sunday schools. They not only teach musical disciplines but are also

engaged in catechization. That is why, considering the tasks facing our Church today, we should give special attention to the training of choir conductors, to the work of our conductors departments. The documents prepared on this topic are not simple. I think we will have a discussion today. There already are essential amendments, including mine. But the most important thing is that the training of choir conductors is an issue proposed to the Supreme Church Council and through it to our whole Church for reflection and decision”.

The Supreme Church Council includes:

- Metropolitan Varsonofiy of St. Petersburg and Ladoga, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate;
- Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations;
- Metropolitan Clement of Kaluga and Borovsk, chairman of the ROC Publishing Council;
- Metropolitan Arseny of Istra, first vicar of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia;
- Metropolitan Ioann of Belgorod and Stary Oskol, chairman of the Synodal Mission Department;
- Metropolitan Merkury of Rostov and Novocherkassk, chairman of the Synodal Department for Religious Education and Catechism;
- Metropolitan Mark of Ryazan and Mikhailovskm, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate financial and economic office;
- Metropolitan Kirill of Stavropol and Nevinnomysk, chairman of the Synodal Department for Cooperation with the Cossacks;
- Archbishop Feognost of Sergiev Posad, chairman of the Synodal Department for Monasteries and Monastics;
- Archbishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, director of the Moscow Patriarchate administrative secretariat;
- Bishop Irinarch of Krasnogorsk, chairman of the Synodal Department for Prison Service;
- Bishop Panteleimon of Orekhovo-Zuevo, chairman of the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Service;
- Bishop Tikhon of Yegoryevsk, chairman of the Patriarchal Council for Culture;
- Bishop Antony of Bogorodsk, director of the Moscow Patriarchate office for institutions abroad;
- Bishop Serafim of Lyubertsy, chairman of the Synodal Department for Youth;
- Archpriest Sergiy Privalov, chairman of the Synodal Department for Cooperation with the Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Bodies;
- Archpriest Dimitry Smirnov, chairman of the Patriarchal Commission for the Family, Protection of Motherhood and Childhood;
- V. Legoida, chairman of the Synodal Department for the Church's Relations with Society and the Mass Media.

Some bishops and clergy as officers of various church bodies have been invited to attend the Supreme Church Council meetings.

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