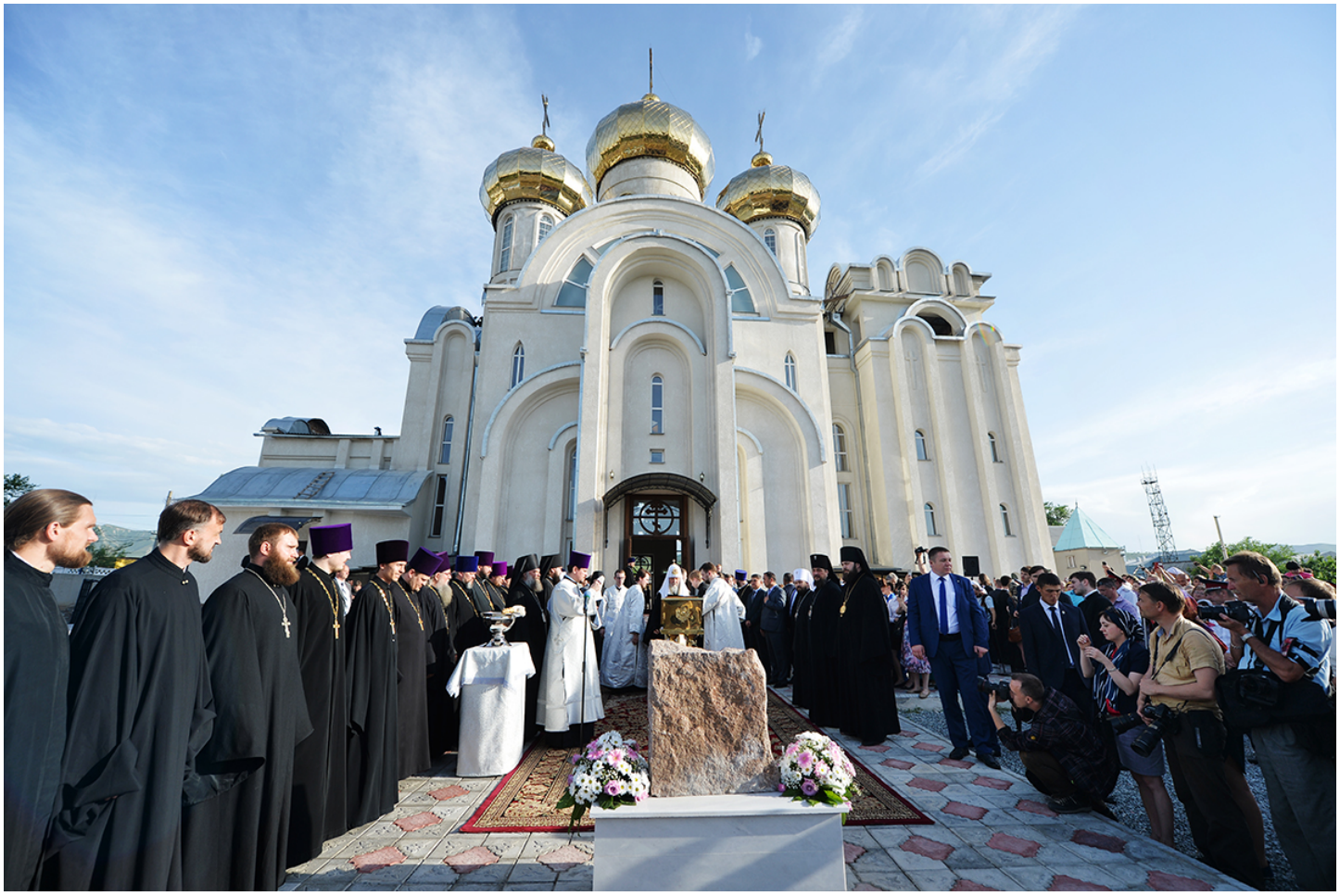
Patriarch Kirill blesses the foundation stone of a new St. Vladimir School in Bishkek



May 28, 2017 – His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia visited the Cathedral of St. Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles in Bishkek. His Holiness was welcomed by the rector of the cathedral Archpriest Alexiy Zaitsev.

Having inspected the church, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church performed the rite of the blessing of the foundation stone for a new building of the St. Vladimir School.

Participating in the service were Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Uzbekistan, head of the Metropolitan of Central Asia; Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations; Archbishop of Pyatigorsk and Cherkessk, temporary administrator of the Patriarchal deanery in Turkmenistan; Archbishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate administrative secretariat; Bishop Pitirim of Dushanbe and Tajikistan; Bishop Daniel of Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan, and the Bishkek clergy.

Present at the rite of blessing were Z. Ergeshev, director of the of the state commission for religious affairs in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan; and A. Kulmatov, head of the Kyrgyz presidential administration department for ethnic and religious policy and cooperation with the civil society.

Among the worshippers were S. Aristov, director of the St. Vladimir School, teachers, schoolchildren and their parents.

The inscription on the foundation stone reads: 'This stone is laid in the foundation of the School of St. Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles at the Cathedral of the Holy Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles in the city of Bishkek and blessed by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia on the 28th of May in the year of our Lord 2017'.

After the service, Patriarch Kirill addressed himself to the congregation with a primatial homily:

'We have performed a very important act of blessing the foundation of the future building of an Orthodox school so that our people may preserve the faith in the present situation in which a huge information flow is hurled on each one making it difficult to distinguish between good and evil, truth and lie.

'Orthodox Christians can fearlessly make their life journey if they unite their faith with knowledge, if they are educated, modern and capable of understanding clearly where there is truth in this information flow and where there is falsehood. If one has clear beliefs, in the first place, that a life without God's law, a life running contrary to God's morality instilled in our human nature, then it is a life of a looser – a life that does not lead to true success, nor to happiness or well-being. To have a clear view of what is happening to all of us today and our view of the past and the future clear and confident, we should form the younger generation of Orthodox people on the solid basis of the faith for them to be well-educated and capable of active participation in the life of society and of building their life on the basis of the law of God.

'The times are past when we lived in isolation, when few were interested in church life, when an Orthodox believer could not occupy a however important post, that of a teacher or master of a school, an engineer or scientist or politician. Today, all the possibilities are open for believers, including in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan. It is important therefore for the Orthodox, who safeguard their faith and the moral foundation of their life, to have an opportunity to become quite successful through receiving a good education and mastering a trade. Because a person who has a status enabling him or her to influence others can transmit both good and evil. It is important that these prominent posts should be occupied by those who transmit goodness to others. It is for this sake, I believe, that we have laid this stone today.

‘Today I have met with representatives of the Islamic clergy. We talked about many things, including the moral basis in the life of the modern man. And I was gladdened by the fact that we have many things in common. We have different faiths but a common morality – the one that comes from sacred texts. And it is remarkable that in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan today there are opportunities not only for Muslims but also for Orthodox Christians to receive education and to regulate their lives. Let it continue so. And may the lives of people, both Orthodox Christians and Muslims living in this country, go in peace and well-being’.

His Holiness gave to the school as a gift an icon of the Holy Princes Bois and Gleb.

To the congregation the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church gave small icons of St. Vladimir with a Patriarchal benediction.

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The Orthodox school in Bishkek was opened in 2008 with the blessing of the Metropolitan of Tashkent and Central Asia. Today, there are 34 teachers and 120 children from the 1st to the 9th grades. There is a lack of facilities and the classes have to be conducted in two shifts in five rooms.

The new building is intended for 450 people. There will be a football and volleyball fields and an assembly hall. The classes will be provided with up-to-day equipment.

The school will use a Kyrgyz-Russian integral curriculum developed on the basis of the educational standards of the two countries and may become a model for bilateral cooperation in education in the educational projects of the Eurasian Economic Union.

Patriarchal Press Service

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Photo by Patriarchal Press Service

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