On the Ss Cyril and Methodius Day, Patriarch Kirill celebrates liturgy at the Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow



On May 24, 2017, the commemoration day of Ss Cyril and Methodius Equal-to-the-Apostle, the Teachers of the Slavs, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. This day also marks the Day of the Slavic Literature and Culture. The Russian Orthodox Church marks on this day its Primate's name day.

Upon his arrival in the Church of Christ the Saviour, Patriarch Kirill venerated the honourable relics of St. Nicholas at the western gates. During the Divine Liturgy the access to the relics for pilgrims continued.

His Holiness was assisted by a great assembly of hierarchs including Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and Ukraine; Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York, the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia.

Participating in the serve were representatives of Local Orthodox Churches to the Moscow Patriarchate: Metropolitan Athanasios of Kyrinia (Orthodox Church of Alexandria), Archimandrite Stephen (Dispirakis) (Orthodox Church of Jerusalem); Archimandrite Feoktist (Dimitrov) (Bulgarian Orthodox Church), Archimandrite Seraphim (Shemyatovsky) (Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia).

Among Patriarch's concelebrants were also high-ranking clergy and officials, abbots of monasteries and Moscow clergy.

Among the worshippers were Metropolitan Niphon of Philippople, representatives of the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Grand Duke George Mikhailovich Romanov, mothers superior of ROC convents, Orthodox Muscovites and numerous pilgrims.

Present at the festive service were the Coptic Patriarch Tawadros II, President Gjorge Ivanov of Macedonia, the first deputy head of the Presidential Administration S. Kirienko, Archbishop Francesco Cacucci of Bari-Bitonto, the Apostolic Nuncio to Russia Archbishop Celestino Migliore, Kazakhstan's Ambassador I. Tasmagambetov, Macedonia's Ambassador Goce Karajanov, the delegations accompanying the Head of the Coptic Church and the President of Macedonia, and the Italian delegation who participated in the bringing of the relics of St. Nicholas from Bari to Russia.

Singing along with the Patriarchal Choir of the Church of Christ the Savior was the choir of the youth movement 'Orthodox Volunteers' conducted by Anna Golik.

During the Lesser Entrance, Patriarch Kirill elevated Archpriest Vladimir Divakov, patriarchal secretary and rector of the church of the Ascension (Bolshoe Voznesenie) at the Nikitsky Gate in Moscow, to the rank of protopresbyter.

During the Prayer of Fervent Supplication, Patriarch Kirill led the congregation in a prayer for peace in Ukraine.

A thanksgiving was celebrated to Ss Cyril and Methodius with prayers for Patriarch Kirill. Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine read out a congratulatory address to the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church.

On behalf of the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Onufry presented Patriarch Kirill with an icon of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker, blessed at the relics of the saint. According to the metropolitan, the icon was painted to mark the bringing of St. Nicholas's relics from Bari to the Russian Orthodox Church. 'We pray, he said, 'that St. Nicholas, through his intercession, may help you perform the great cross-bearing and ministry which you carry out with dignity in our Holy Russian Orthodox Church'.

His Beatitude also presented Patriarch Kirill with hierarchal vestments, on behalf of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, saying, ‘We wish to greet you with the day of your heavenly patron and wholeheartedly thank you for the place you find in your heart for our Church, too, and love us, and pray for us, and share in all possible ways in the trials and sorrows that the Lord allows for our spiritual improvement’.

Mr. Sergey Kirienko, speaking on behalf of the Russian President Vladimir Putin, congratulated the participants in the service on the church-state holiday – the Day of Slavic Literature and Culture, and on the name day of the Primate of the Russian Church.

‘Allow me on this day, Your Holiness, to express the words of profound gratitude and respect for the service carried out by the Russian Orthodox Church and you as its Patriarch by promoting the development and support of the spiritual foundations of the Russian statehood, support for the traditional family values, morality, spirituality of our society, mercy and charity – all that constitutes the bulwark of Russia and the Russian statehood’, he said, making a special mention of ‘a great peacemaking contribution’ made by the head of the Russian Church to the development of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional peace in Russia and the world’.

‘The years of your Patriarchal ministry’, he continued, ‘have fallen upon a difficult time when there are very many of those who wish to try and shake the spiritual foundations of our state. These years, in which the Church has acquired a special role, her importance and influence have been growing, and for this reason there will always be those who would try to struggle with this, including attempts to attack somehow the very leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, His Holiness the Patriarch.

‘By your own example of not just a leader but also a strong and courageous man who never tries to evade difficult problems but, on the contrary, assumes full responsibility for both church affairs and matters concerning the ethical and spiritual development of our society, you give everybody a striking example of how a man, who lives in a true faith and follows the commandments of Holy Scriptures and traditions of the Russian Orthodox Church, can do both overcome problems himself and guide the society and all the laity united by the Russian Orthodox Church both in our country and beyond it’.

Kazakhstan’s Ambassador I. Tasmagambetov greeted the Patriarch and presented him with Kazakhstan’s state award – the Order of Friendship, First Degree.

Presenting the award, the ambassador read out a Decree of the President of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbaev,

stating that the award is granted ‘for the fruitful work in developing Kazakhstan-Russian relations and services for strengthening peace, friendship and cooperation between the peoples of Kazakhstan and Russia’.

‘In Kazakhstan, along with Islam’, he said, ‘Orthodoxy as one of the leading confessions occupies a special place in the life of society. The Russian Orthodox Church in our state carries out a very important constructive work and plays a weighty role in asserting spiritual values, inculcating love and respect for the Motherland and strengthening inter-ethnic harmony.

‘Your Patriarchal visits to Kazakhstan became very important spiritual events not only for the Orthodox flock, but also for the whole public in the country. Speaking about spiritual events, I cannot but mention the fact that, thanks to your good initiatives and primatial efforts, an event took place that made it possible for tens of thousands of Orthodox Christians to venerate the holy relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker. In this we see a continuation and augmentation of good traditions of the Russian Orthodox Church’.

Then the Primate of the Russian Church addressed himself to the congregation with a primatial homily.

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