Christian Inter-Confessional Consultative Committee completes its 5th plenary session



Representatives of the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christian communities from the CIS and Baltic countries took part in the 5th plenary session of the Christian Inter-Confessional Consultative Committee (CICC) at the Constantine Palace in St. Petersburg on 26 April 2017. The meeting brought together delegates from Armenia Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tadzhikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

The plenary session on ‘Faith and the Overcoming of Civil Confrontation: Lessons of the Century’ was moderated by the CICC co-chairmen: Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations; Archbishop Paolo Pezzi, Ordinary of the Catholic Archdiocese of the Mother of God in Moscow; and Archbishop Dietrich Brauer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia.

During the opening session, messages of greetings from the Russian President Vladimir Putin and

Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia were read out. The participants in the meeting also received greetings from Mr. Geogry Poltavchenko, Governor of St. Petersburg, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Among the key-note speakers of the 5th plenary session were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, DECR chairman; Archbishop Paolo Pezzi, Ordinary of the Catholic Archdiocese of the Mother of God in Moscow; and Bishop Einārs Alpe of the Diocese of Daugavpils of the Lutheran Church of Latvia.

The participants in the meeting approved a new version of the Provisions of the Christian Inter-Confessional Consultative Committee and adopted the Communiqué and the Message of the Participants in the CICC 5th Plenary Session. As is stated in the message, the tragic events of the beginning of the 20th century were caused not only by social and economic reasons, but also, first and foremost, by a deep spiritual crisis of society. Questioned at the time were the traditional principles governing people's life that had always been based on the desire to follow God's truth. The clash of the absolutized political ideas led to the bloody fratricidal war and mass repressions, which affected the lives of millions of people.

"The wounds of those events can still be seen. What is needed to heal them is not only time, but also the spiritual effort of repentance and mutual forgiveness. Each side of the conflict defended its own class-motivated or social truth. However, the history teaches us that if this truth – always partial – is being absolutized, and, as a result, one sector of society is opposed to the other, it causes an explosion in society that destroys the very foundations of the state order and social relations. By calling to forgiveness and repentance Christians testify that there is the higher truth – the truth of acceptance, of love for one's neighbour and of service to each other. It is in following this truth that the basis of peaceful and creative life of people and nations lies," the message reads.

"Carrying out their service in the fifteen independent states, representatives of the Christian confessions – the CICC members – are aware of their responsibility for the future of their peoples," the document states, "As His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia emphasized in his message of greetings, 'while reflecting upon the lessons of the 20th century, we all ought to make our contribution to the promotion of peace and accord in society. I am convinced that it will help avoid many mistakes in future that might lead to new divisions.' If we learn the history's lessons well, it can save us from repeating the tragedies of the past."

The participants in the CICC 5th plenary session expressed their hope that "the voice of the Christian communities will be heard and the discussion that is under way in our societies concerning the centenary-old events will continue in a constructive key, in the spirit of reconciliation, brotherly accord and love."

DECR Communication Service

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