



## **Primate of Russian Orthodox Church celebrates Liturgy at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow on Sunday of Orthodoxy**



On 5 March 2017, 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent, feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia celebrated the Liturgy of St Basil the Great and the Office of the Triumph of Orthodoxy at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow.

Concelebrating with His Holiness were an assembly of hierarchs and clergymen of the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches: Metropolitan Niphon of Philipopolis (Orthodox Church of Antioch), Bishop Antonije of Moravicí (Serbian Orthodox Church), Archimandrite Feoktist (Dimitrov) (Bulgarian Orthodox Church), and Archimandrite Seraphim (Shemyatovsky) (Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia).

Among those who attended the service were ambassadors of Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Moldova, and South Ossetia.

After the Litany of Fervent Supplication the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church said a prayer for peace in Ukraine.

The Office of the Triumph of Orthodoxy followed the Liturgy. To conclude the celebrations, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill addressed his flock with a Primatial homily, saying in particular:

“Today we are commemorating the victory over heresies, joining in our mind the celebrations that took place in Constantinople in the 9th century, when with the active participation of the pious Empress Theodora and with the full support of bishops and laypeople, it was made possible to put an end to a hardest period of iconoclasm...

“What was the danger of this heresy? Why was it met with a brave and strong opposition by hierarchs, priests, and monks, and why did, after all, the pious Empress Theodora get into this fight? It happened because by rejecting the icons the heresiarchs rejected the reality of God’s Incarnation. For if the Lord Jesus Christ became incarnate, if He left His countenance, if the Mother of God lived, then the question arises: why cannot we reproduce these faces? Why, looking at the images, cannot we apply to those who have already left our earthly life and abide in the heavenly realm? Why, looking at an image, cannot we lift up our mind to its prototype? It seems so evident: if icons are ousted, then the very idea of God’s Incarnation is ousted. Yet, many people did not realize that and yielded to the temptation whose father is the deceiver, the enemy of mankind...

“What does it mean to preserve dogmata, to preserve faith? We often say that an Orthodox Christian is the one who preserves faith. Yet, it is not enough to repeat old wordings of the dogmata. In order to preserve the faith in an active and, I would say, creative way, we should correlate the Divine truths fixed in those dogmata with the reality of our life. If we base our life on faith, on those very dogmata, then we can oppose devil the deceiver, the enemy of mankind who again and again tries to fill human judgments with his lie. This is where the importance, the power and the topicality of what we call the Orthodox faith lies. May Our Lord help us through the prayers of our holy predecessors whose names we have solemnly commemorated today to uphold the Orthodox faith and to proclaim it with wisdom and persuasiveness for the next generations.”

*Patriarchal Press Service/*

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