



## 8th anniversary of Patriarch Kirill's enthronement marked with Divine Liturgy at Church of Christ the Saviour



On February 1, 2017, the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the enthronement of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the Cathedral Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church was assisted by a great assembly of hierarchs as well as bishops and priests in holy orders leading the ROC synodal and church-wide institutions.

Among his concelebrants were also representatives of Local Orthodox Churches to the Patriarch of Moscow, including Metropolitan Athanasios of Kyrenia (Orthodox Church of Alexandria), Bishop Anthony of Moravici (Serbian Orthodox Church), Archimandrite Stephan (Dispirakis) (Orthodox Church of Jerusalem), Archimandrite Feoktist (Dimitrov) (Bulgarian Orthodox Church), Archimandrite Seraphim (Shemyatovksi) (Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia).

Present at the service were A. Beglov, presidential envoy to Central Russia and chairman of the presidential council for the Cossack affairs; S. Stephashin, chairman of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society; S. Gavrilov, chairman of the State Duma committee for the development of civil society and for public and religious organizations; V. Resin, State Duma deputy and patriarchal advisor on construction; Ms. T. Moskalkova, Russia's human rights commissioner; K. Dolgov, Russian Foreign Ministry commissioner for human rights, democracy and rule of law; A. Sharov, head of the Federal service for communication and information technologies; V. Suchkov, head of the Moscow department for ethnic policy, interregional relations and tourism, and other officials and representatives of public organizations.

Among the worshippers were Metropolitan Niphon of Philippi, representative of the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East; Archimandrite Yevlogy, abbot of the Russian monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mount Athos; V. Legoida, head of the synodal department for the Church's relations with society and mass media; Ye. Parkhaev, director of the ROC's Sofrino art and production enterprise; V. Alekseyev, president of the International Foundation for Unity of Orthodox Nations, as well as abbesses, Moscow and Moscow Region clergy, staff members of synodal and other church structures, representatives of parish councils, professors and students of church educational institutions.

The Prayer of Fervent Supplication included special petitions for Patriarch Kirill. It was followed by a prayer for the Primate of the Russian Church lifted up by the Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine, after which Patriarch Kirill led the congregation in a prayer for peace in Ukraine.

The celebration was broadcast live by Soyuz TV channel.

After the liturgy, Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine read out a congratulatory address from the ROC Holy Synod and presented Patriarch Kirill with a copy of the Don Icon of the Mother of God and flowers.

Congratulations were also offered by A. Beglov, presidential envoy for Central Russia.

In his address to the congregation, Patriarch Kirill said:

'I thank you all for having deemed it possible to come on this day to pray together with me. I am especially delighted to see so many bishops who are here today to share in prayer with the Patriarch. Many of you, living far away from the capital city, perform the common task to strengthen Russian Orthodoxy, to serve the Church of the Lord Who commanded us to go and baptize, to preach, to call people to salvation. Today, by a concurrence of circumstances when the ecclesial and astronomic

calendars coincide, the service is to contain the reading of a passage from the First Epistle of St. Peter (1 Pet. 4:12-5:5). There are words in this apostolic reading that struck me by their power many years ago when I was only preparing to take the path of service of the Church: The elders which are among you I exhort: Feed the flock without being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

At each place of hierarchal ministry it is not easy to fulfil this apostolic commandment because the words 'being lords' are often realized in quite specific actions of a minister, especially a bishop, who is given, by God Himself through the holy apostles, the right to bind and decide, to make sometimes very strict canonical decisions. They may seem to an outsider a manifestation of domination of one person over another, but it is not at all so. To prevent anyone ever even think that a churchman, be he a priest or a bishop or a patriarch, dominates the flock it is necessary to observe the last part of this wonderful apostolic commandment: be an example to the flock. If there is no example, the most harmless action can be taken as domination and there will be no confidence in either words or deed, especially those of hierarchs and a Patriarch. Therefore, the direct, and I would say radical, observance of the apostolic commandment is an indispensable condition for success of a priest and a bishop and, the more so, a Patriarch.

For it to be so, one has to exert much effort. To be an example one has to be a little above those who wish to see an example in you. It does not mean that everyone wishes to see an example in you but there are those who are seen so, be he a priest, a rector of a church, an abbot or abbess of a monastery, but especially a bishop and a Patriarch. But for it to be so, we all should remember and confess with all the power of our soul that there will be no result if we artificially create some image of piety, righteousness, justice and kindness; for indeed, it is impossible to deceive one's heart. You can deceive one and another and still another, but it is impossible to deceive the Church.

It means that to be an example one should work unremittingly and work not only at the honest, responsible, selfless fulfilment of one's direct duties but also at oneself, at one's inner world, at one's ability to struggle with sins, overcoming temptations and human weakness.

Thank you all, my dear ones, for kind words and your prayers, and I ask you to remember the Patriarch in your prayers, who, to fulfill the apostolic commandment we all heard today, needs your prayer and you spiritual support. I warmly thank you all for your service of the Lord, for your strengthening the Church, for our unity, for our spiritual communion and for our common prayer. Amen.'

Then Patriarch Kirill presented church awards to archpastors and pastors who marked remarkable dates in their life in these days.

*Patriarchal Press Service*

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