



## **Patriarch Kirill meets with Paris Mayor Ms. A. Hidalgo**

On December 4, 2016, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with the Mayor of Paris Ms. Anne Hidalgo after the Divine Liturgy at the newly consecrated Cathedral of the Holy Trinity.

Taking part in the talk was also Bishop Nestor of Chersonese.

In the beginning of the meeting, the Paris Mayor referred to the words of gratitude expressed that day to Parisians by His Holiness with regard to the construction of the church and the Orthodox spiritual and cultural center: 'These very warm words deeply moved me and I am confident they will move many Parisians'. She told His Holiness about the close and constructive relations established between the Diocese of Chersonese and the Paris Mayor's Office, saying that she wanted religious Russians including Orthodox ones to feel at home in Paris. She expressed the conviction that the beautiful church and the cultural center next to it would help establish even closer relations.

On his part, His Holiness thanked his interlocutor, who came to the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity on the remarkable day of its consecration and once again thanked her for 'the opportunity to have a Russian cathedral built in such a remarkable place'.

Noting that many buildings are erected in Paris just as in any today's city, His Holiness stressed that the construction of the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity of the Russian Orthodox Church diocese of Chersonese has a historic significance. 'Even if the purely religious dimension of the event is put aside, it is an enormous contribution to our cultural cooperation, most importantly, to cordial relations between nations. When politicians or academics meet, they usually have an intellectual talk, while businessmen talk on the level of stomach and purse, whereas when traditions, religious and cultural, meet, the talk is held on the level of the heart because it is religious feelings, art and culture that help understand the soul of a people', he said.

'That is why I give such a great importance to relations between Churches and religious communities', he continued, 'and in this sense the construction of a Russian cathedral is a contribution to dialogue between our countries and peoples. The very fact that this construction has become possible helps us, Russians, understand the soul of the French people and to feel their generosity'.

They also spoke about the need to defend Christians in the Middle East. The Paris Mayor noted that on

their level they take serious humanitarian efforts and are ready to support initiatives of the Russian Orthodox Church in these problems. Ms. Hidalgo also expressed conviction that the newly open spiritual and cultural center would become a platform for discussing in particular the problem of protection of the Christian population in the Middle East.

The talk also dealt with the protection of the environment. Having expressed her concern for its state, Ms. Hidalgo noted that the position of the Russian Orthodox Church and personally its Primate on ecological problems was of great importance. On his part, His Holiness informed Ms. Hidalgo about initiatives made by the Moscow Patriarchate in the conservation of the environment as God's creation.

*DECR Communication Service*

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Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/48909/>