Patriarch Kirill meets with delegation of Greek Orthodox Church



On November 21, 2016, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with a delegation for the Greek Orthodox Church.

The delegation, who came to Moscow for the celebrations on the occasion of Patriarch Kirill's 70th birthday, included Metropolitan Ignatios of Demetrias and Metropolitan Seraphim of Piraeus.

Participating in the meeting from the Russian Orthodox Church were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Department for External Church Relations (DECR), Bishop Gregory of Troitsk and Yuzhnouralsk; Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman; Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations, and Rev. Anatoly Churyakov and Mr. S. Monakhov, DECR staff members.

Addressing the guests, His Holiness said, 'I am deeply gratified with your participation in the

celebrations. It gives us as Primates and representatives of Orthodox Churches an opportunity to pray together, to celebrate the Holy Eucharist and to show the real unity of Orthodoxy to the world.

‘There are many various things happening in the life of each Local Orthodox Church. Some part of the episcopate, clergy and laity may have different views of some theological issues and disturbing problems coming from external sources or having external nature. Our con-celebration of the Divine Liturgy however is a very important sign showing that the existing differences do not divide the Church. According to St. Paul, there have to be differences among us (cf. 1Cor. 11:19), and the fact that the Church has preserved unity for centuries in spite of the existing differences is certainly a sign of God’s presence in our life: through the power of the Holy Spirit our human limitations and weaknesses are rectified’.

His Holiness expressed support for His Beatitude Archbishop Hieronymus of Athens and the episcopate of the Greek Church who are going through serious external trials. ‘The Russian Church went through even harder trials in the 20th century. We know from our experience what it means to resist an external influence and pressure’, he stressed, ‘We pray for the Greek Church and the Greek people. We are with you in defending the ideals to be preserved in the life of the Greek society and we believe that the devotion of the Greek people and their strong Orthodox tradition will help them hold out in face of many external temptations’.

Metropolitan Ignatios, in his turn, said, ‘Your Holiness, for me and for my brother Metropolitan Seraphim it is a great honour to represent His Beatitude Archbishop Hieronymos of Athens and All Greece at the celebrations on the occasion of your birthday. We believe it a blessing of God that we concelebrated the Divine Liturgy with you and other Primates of Local Orthodox Churches thus participating in a unique event which is the Eucharistic unity’. He stressed that no theological views and opinions can become a cause for division within Orthodoxy at these fateful times.

‘We thank Your Holiness for your thinking and remembering of us at these fateful and crucial times and we thank you for the help, including the material one, you give us at this difficult moment. This aid has been distributed to the metropolises of the Greek Church, and with great gratitude we always lift up your name in our prayers’, Metropolitan Ignatios stressed.

He also stated that the Primate, Holy Synod and episcopate of the Greek Church are waging an intensive struggle against the attempts to secularize the Greek society and to propagate godlessness among people.

‘Thank you for praying for us, and on our part, we look and wonder at the things that happen to you’, the metropolitan said, ‘Please be assured that we are always with you in the spirit of unity because we are

tied with the Russian Church by ages-long unshakable bonds’.

The delegation handed over to Patriarch Kirill a gift from Archbishop Hieronymos of Athens and All Greece – a holy pectoral icon and two candles made of Greek figured wax.

Patriarch Kirill handed over liturgical vestments made especially for Archbishop Ieronymos as well as a crozier and a copy of his 8-volume Collected Works. To Metropolitans Ignatios and Seraphim he gave bishop’s croziers.

DECR Communication Service

Photos by Patriarchal Press Service

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