



## His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with Metropolitan Rastislav of the Czech Lands and Slovakia



On 21 November 2016, at the Patriarchal residence in St Daniel's Monastery, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church met with His Beatitude Metropolitan Rastislav of the Czech Lands and Slovakia.

Metropolitan Rastislav was accompanied by Archbishop Michal of Prague and Czech Lands; Archimandrite Seraphim (Shemyatovsky), representative of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia; and archdeacon Maxim (Durila).

Among those representing the Russian Orthodox Church at the meeting were also Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Bishop Paramon of Bronnitsy; archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR vice-chairman; archpriest Nikolai Lischenyuk, representative of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia; and archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations.

The Primate of the Russian Church cordially greeted His Beatitude Metropolitan Rastislav and those accompanying him on his visit to Moscow for the celebrations of Patriarch Kirill's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, and noted that the Moscow Patriarchate and the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia had maintained good relationships marked by important historical events in the past.

“The Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia has its distinctive cultural feature,” Patriarch Kirill said, “It is an Eastern Orthodox Church, but it acts in the country of the Western European culture. This Church uses the Czech and the Slovak languages, and at the same time almost everyone speaks Russian. Its typicon is the same as the one used in the Russian Orthodox Church. We do not differ from each other in our rites. It all creates special ties between us. We all, Orthodox Christians, belong to one Church, regardless of our cultural and ritual differences caused by our specific liturgical traditions. Yet, when you pray together with someone who prays exactly like you, it makes you feel that these are special relationships. Therefore, we always have warm feelings towards the Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia.”

During the meeting, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill mentioned an important historical event of the Moscow Patriarchate's granting autocephalous status to the Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia. “We are glad that this autocephaly was recognized by all the Local Orthodox Churches,” the Primate of the Russian Church said, “And that you have an opportunity to participate in all pan-Orthodox meetings, in all pan-Orthodox activities. I wholeheartedly wish God's help to you, to your bishops, clergy and laypeople, so that the basic principles of the Orthodox life would get stronger among the faithful of the Czech Lands and Slovakia.”

His Beatitude Metropolitan Rastislav thanked Patriarch Kirill for his kind words and his love for the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia and said he would always cherish memories of his visits to the Russian Orthodox Church.

His Beatitude wished His Holiness Patriarch Kirill God's help in his toilsome Primatial ministry and noted that one of the most important duties of the Primate was to strive to preserve the pan-Orthodox unity.

*DECR Communication Service*

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