



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill's homily delivered at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour after the Divine Liturgy on 22nd Sunday after Pentecost

On 20 November 2016, 22nd Sunday after Pentecost, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia celebrated the Divine Liturgy together with the Primates and representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches, as well as with an assembly of archpastors and pastors of the Russian Orthodox Church, at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. That day His Holiness turned 70. After the Liturgy, the Primate of the Russian Church addressed all those present with a homily, saying:

"I cordially thank all of you for praying together with me at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour today. It is a great spiritual support for me. I feel the power of prayer of the Primates, the bishops, the clergy and the laypeople, and I realize that it can give strength to me, weak though I am, so that I could continue this ministry for as long as the Lord wills, to continue it with full awareness of my responsibility before God, before the Church and before the people – the responsibility for the very inner life of the Church and for everything that is going on around us, since the Patriarch, the bishops and the whole Church are responsible for people's moral life.

"Looking back at my life, I feel the deepest gratitude to all those good, wise people whom I happened to meet and who helped me prepare for the service, to which the Lord called me in the twilight of my life. I have grateful memories of my pious parents, of my teachers, of the late Metropolitan Nikodim, of my relatives and friends who in various trying circumstances of my difficult life strived to support me, while many others would even be afraid to look my way. I thank all those who have been with me in the joys and sorrows of my life.

"I am particularly grateful to the Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches, both to those who have gathered here today and to those who for some reasons could not come to Moscow. The Primates of the Orthodox Churches have the particular responsibility for preserving the unity of the Orthodoxy, for protecting the Church from divisions, heresies and schisms, and for giving a spiritual and intellectual impetus to the development of the church life. And I thank God for letting me be a member of the family of the Primates. It is a great honour and joy to work side by side with the outstanding hierarchs of the Orthodox Church.

"I also thank the bishops of our Church, carrying out their ministry in various countries, to the hierarchs who are the first to respond to the challenges posed by those striving to destroy the unity of our Church,

as well as by those who for ideological reasons fight against the Church, refusing to see her as a positive factor in the human life. I know that in their ministry bishops rely on the clergy, just as I rely, first of all, on the Moscow clerics and on active laypeople of different age, including the young committed people. Today it is our laypeople, including the youth, who are performing great deeds, often quietly and unnoticeably, but these deeds are changing the moral climate in our country.

“What can I say about myself? Nothing more than we have heard today in St Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians. This year my birthday is on the 22nd Sunday after Pentecost. Of course, it is just a coincidence, but there is nothing fortuitous about God. And St Paul’s words are the only words I can say today with full responsibility and faith. ‘But God forbid that I should glory,’ St Paul writes, ‘save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.’ Amen.”

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