Meeting of Primates of Russian and Polish Orthodox Churches



On November 19, 2016, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with His Beatitude Metropolitan Sava of Warsaw and All Poland, at the patriarchal residence in the St. Daniel Patriarchal Monastery.

The delegation accompanying His Beatitude included Bishop Paisios of Przemyśl and Gorlice, Archpriest Andrzej Lewczak and Protodeacon Rostislav Gwizdak.

Participating in the meeting on the ROC side were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), Archbishop Yelisey of Sourozh; Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman, and Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations.

Greeting the high guest, His Holiness said, ‘I am very glad that you have deemed it possible to come to Moscow in order to pray together on my 70th birthday. As Primate of a Church, you are aware how important it is to have the support of fellow-primates, especially when we celebrate together the liturgy, when all the differences in opinion are overcome and we confess our faith with one mouth and one heart and partake of the Holy Mysteries of Christ’.

The Primate of the Polish Orthodox Church warmly thanked His Holiness for his welcome and invitation to the celebrations. ‘We have known each other since 1968. We have walked our church path together’, Metropolitan Sava said, ‘When we were young, we did not think you would be a Patriarch and I would be a Metropolitan, but the Lord has ordained so. We first met when the late Metropolitan Nikodim came to Warsaw. You were a young man then, and since that time our friendship has continued to this day. It is very important that it is not interrupted but strengthened. And visits at such important moments as birthdays and other events are certainly important because they strengthen our relations even more’.

During their talk, the guest mentioned the visit of Patriarch Kirill to Poland in 2012, noting that it left an important trace to be further expanded on all levels irrespective of different human situations including political ones. ‘Today Orthodoxy plays a significant role in the world. In the situation of laxity and spiritual destabilization of the society, we are facing serious tasks… Notwithstanding all the difficulties and grave moments of history, we should bear our service’, the Primate of the Polish Church said, stressing the importance of contacts with sister Orthodox Churches in this context – contacts ‘which give strength and energy for continuing the witness of our faith’.

Metropolitan Sava also informed His Holiness about the life and service of the Polish Orthodox Church. They discussed the bilateral relations between the Russian and Polish Churches, the importance of inter-church contacts for positive development of relations between nations, and problems involved in pan-Orthodox unity and cooperation.

His Holiness received as a gift an icon of the Holy Martyr Maxim (Sandovich) of Gorlice, who was glorified by the Polish Orthodox Church in 1994. His name is included in the Russian church calendar as well.

In his turn, Patriarch Kirill presented his guest with vestments sewn after the Greek pattern and a copy of the Patriarch’s collected works in nine volumes. Bishop Paisios was presented with a bishop’s crozier and Archpriest Andrzej Lewczak with a commemorative cross.

DECR Communication Service

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