



## His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with Russia's Chief Rabbi Berel Lazar



On 28 October 2016, at the Patriarchal residence in St Daniel's Monastery in Moscow, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with the Chief Rabbi of Russia, Berel Lazar, and Mr. Alexander Boroda, chairman of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia.

Representing the Russian Orthodox Church at the meeting were also Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), vice-chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, and Rev. Dimitry Safonov, DECR secretary for inter-religious relations.

Greeting the guests, His Holiness noted that he rated highly the level of cooperation between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia. "We maintain very good cooperation on many issues at the level of the Interreligious Council. We hold the same views on the majority of the issues, basing ourselves on the Biblical moral principles," His Holiness said.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church emphasized that the defence of moral life, of people's spiritual life was the task of all traditional religions.

Rabbi Berel Lazar thanked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill for the meeting and said in particular, "We appreciate your openness, understanding and friendship, because you, indeed, set an example and, as a spiritual person, always find the right decision."

According to the Chief Rabbi of Russia, many of today's problems in the world are seen in the context of inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts. "Terrorism always finds justification for itself in religion. We always say that it is not religion; it is against religion," Rabbi Berel Lazar said.

As he noted, today the ideas of inter-ethnic peace and inter-religious accord are becoming firmly established in the Russian society. "I think it happens thanks to you, to a large extent, and we are very grateful for that. We are glad that we can discuss with you various issues and promote cooperation with the Russian Orthodox Church," he continued.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said in response, "Thank you for your kind words. All that has been achieved in inter-confessional relations is the fruit of our joint efforts."

According to His Holiness, it is necessary to help people of different nationalities and religious traditions feel comfortable in Russia and express their religious feelings in accordance with their tradition.

The participants in the meeting discussed various aspects of inter-religious cooperation in Russia, including the activities of the Inter-Religious Council of Russia, the promotion of theology as a branch of science, and the defence of traditional moral values.

*Patriarchal Press Service*

*DECR Communication Service*

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