His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrates divine service in London at the Dormition Cathedral of the Russian Church Abroad



In the evening of the 15th of October 2016, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, while on a pastoral visit to Great Britain, celebrated Matins at the London church of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, consecrated in honour of the Dormition of the Mother of God and the Holy Royal Passion-Bearers.

Concelebrating with the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Archbishop Mark of Berlin, Germany and Great Britain; Archbishop Michael of Geneva and Western Europe; Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administrative Secretariat; Archbishop Yelisei of Sourozh; and Bishop Antony of Bogorodsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administration for Institutions Abroad.

During a litany, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said a prayer for Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain.

After the service, Archbishop Mark of Berlin, Germany and Great Britain greeted His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, saying in particular, “We cordially thank Your Holiness for finding time, despite all your manifold commitments, to pray with us at the All-Night Vigil in this holy Church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos and the Holy Royal Passion-Bearers.”

Archbishop Mark presented the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church with an icon of the Holy Royal Passion-Bearers.

Addressing all the numerous worshippers, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said in particular:

“It was with a special feeling that I celebrated the divine service with you today in this wonderful new church. I recall that some ten years ago, leaving London after yet another working trip, I saw from a distance a church under construction. They told me that it belonged to the Russian Church Abroad. And although we were not yet one Church back then, I was glad that our Russian community… got a new church, consistent with the history of this community and with the people who attend it.”

“It all began three hundred years ago when the embassy church opened here. The remarkable clergymen made their contribution to the promotion of Orthodoxy in this country. Today, while visiting the place where, it may be said, the community emerged and the first services were celebrated, I have already commemorated those clergymen, archpriest Iakov Smirnov and archpriest Yevgeny Popov, who for over a hundred years, first one, then the other, worked to consolidate the Orthodox parish, at that time the only such parish in London.”

“When the tragedy occurred in our homeland and the nation divided, and the country divided, it affected the life of our longsuffering Church. We know that far back as 1927 our church community divided: some followed Metropolitan Eulogius (Georgiyevsky); the others, the Synod of the Church Abroad. The division that existed for many decades was in a spiritual and in an ecclesiastical sense not a real schism, but a superficial scar on the body of our Church, and was overcome by God’s mercy. And today there is one Russian Orthodox Church, and I as Patriarch never divide parishes into patriarchal ones and foreign ones, because for me they all are parishes of the one Russian Orthodox Church. Today, looking at your faces, I have seen the same people that fill our parishes everywhere, be it in England, Europe, America, or Russia. These are our Orthodox faithful and by God’s blessing they are now under the omophorion of the one Russian Orthodox Church. It multiplies our strength: we do not expend efforts on arguing, on finding out some historical truth, but devote them to educating our people, to strengthening the Orthodox faith and to preaching it in every place where our Church is present, including Great Britain.”

“The first stone was laid in the foundation of this church some twenty years ago. Today we see the construction almost finished, with only frescoes left. It is also a symbol of your faith and of the faith of your predecessors. It shows that the fire of the Orthodox faith and of the love for God burns in the hearts of our people, no matter where they are living. We must never let this fire get extinguished or die down.”

“I invoke upon you all God’s blessing and the blessing of all the saints who shone forth in the Russian land, of the holy new martyrs and confessors of our Church. May the Lord by their supplications enkindle the spiritual life of the Russian people living far from their homeland. To commemorate today’s service, I would like to present to this church an icon of the Resurrection of Christ containing a small memorial plaque with the inscription saying that it is a gift from the Patriarch. Every time you venerate this icon, please, remember in your prayers your Patriarch who needs them very much. May the Lord save you.”

All the worshippers received small Tikvin icons of the Mother of God with the Patriarchal blessing.

DECR Communication Service

Photo by the Patriarchal press Service

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