Patriarch Kirill celebrates liturgy at the church of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted-in-Bolshaya-Ordynka



On June 24, 2016, the commemoration day of the Holy Princess Olga Equal-to-the-Apostles, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Moscow church of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted-in-Bolshaya-Ordynka.

His Holiness was assisted by a great assembly of bishops and clergy including high church officials and representatives of the Patriarchate of Antioch, the Orthodox Churches of Bulgaria, Cyprus, Serbia, and the Czech Lands of Slovakia.

The service was attended by the benefactors of the church and numerous parishioners.

The Patriarchal service was broadcast by the Soyuz TV network.

During the Prayer of Fervent Supplication, prayers were lifted up for the celebrated rector of the church,

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, on the occasion of his 50th birthday.

After the Prayer of Fervent Supplication, His Holiness said a prayer for peace in Ukraine.

The sermon before communion was delivered by Archpriest Nikolay Balashov.

After the liturgy, a thanksgiving was celebrated with petitions for Metropolitan Hilarion whose anniversary was celebrated that day.

Patriarch Kirill addressed himself to the faithful with a primatial homily. Greeting Metropolitan Hilarion on the occasion of his birthday, His Holiness said in particular,

'Today we have gathered together to honour His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, who marks his 50th birthday. In this connection I would like to stress the great importance of theology, which helps us to take in rationally the truths laid by God into the very essence of the human being. We call these truths ontological because they come from the essence of God and are part of the human essence. In order to understand and assimilate them it is necessary for the Church to speak about them correctly and for her to speak about them correctly it is necessary to develop theology, that is, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of the human being, the knowledge of the history of human thought. And I would like to note the contribution made by His Eminence to the development of Russian theology.

'The Lord has given you, Your Eminence, many abilities and gifts, and you remarkably develop them in various fields of church service. And since we celebrate your 50th birthday today in the church as a liturgical and devotional celebration of the auspicious date, I would like to thank you for your work in the great and sacred cause of conveying to people the divine truths in the terms of Russian Orthodox theology. May the Lord preserve you in your service, may He help you in your many duties and interests to separate the main things from secondary ones, to devote your life to the main thing and a small part of human leisure to things secondary'.

In recognition of the zealous archapstoral work and on the occasion of his 50th birthday Metropolitan Hilarion was awarded the Order of St. Alexis, Metropolitan of Kiev, Moscow and All Russia. Patriarch Kirill also presented Metropolitan Hilarion with a commemorative pectoral icon and a cross.

Responding to His Holiness and addressing the participants in the service, Metropolitan Hilarion said,

'Your Holiness and Merciful Father,

On this day I would like first of all to thank God who has brought us all to this life and given us an

opportunity to work together for glorification of His holy name.

After a half a century-long life in this world, you feel special gratitude to your parents who have given you life. I would like to express special gratitude to my mother, who raised me and gave me the rudiments of the Orthodox faith. She is present here today.

‘There were many good mentors in my life, and today I remember them with gratitude. Some are still alive while others already in the heaven and several of them have been ranked among saints. And this gives you a special feeling of touch with the world we all seek, a feeling that there is no impassable and unsurmountable border between heaven and earth, between the community of saints in the triumphant Church an our human community in the militant Church and the wandering Church.

‘I would like to express special and cordial gratitude to you, Your Holiness, for calling me 21 years ago to serve in your team and for the fact that since that time I have a joy and happiness to be your assistant. You have led me through various church tasks and I have always felt that in all the decisions you have taken concerning me there was the will of God. Therefore, I have taken all these decisions with complete calm and, according to the commandment of your teacher, Metropolitan Nikodim of eternal memory, I have never sought after anything but never refused anything either.

‘The important service of the chairman of the Department for External Church Relations you have entrusted me with presupposes very special duties but your constant primatial attention to the work of the Department helps me to carry them out.

‘When a day begins I stand up before the Lord and ask myself: what does the Lord want from me on this day? I ask the Lord to give me strength to carry out the mission entrusted to me and to do by Himself what is beyond human effort. Again and again I see for myself that the Lord through us does the work He wants to do on the earth – the work of people’s salvation. We are only tools in His hands, and even if we refuse to be obedient to Him, He still makes us do it. Thus, in the Book of the Prophet Jonah we read that the Lord sent him to Nineveh. The prophet did not want to go there, found himself on a boat, was swallowed by a whale, went through hardships, and the whale vomited him out to the dry land. And what was the result? The result was that the Lord said, ‘Now go and do what I told you to do from the very beginning’.

God expects from us the fulfilment of His assignments. I receive these assignments from the Lord through you, Your Holiness. Therefore, every time when I stand praying before the Lord, I ask that He may help me carry out your assignments in the way you expect it from me. And concerning the additional service linked with theology and religious education, which you mentioned today, I try to fulfil it so that it may be beneficial for the Holy Church in the fields of theological science, which need to be

developed and require that we should tell God’s truths to people in the modern language.

‘Your Holiness, I am happy to be not only your assistant but also your disciple. Coming in touch with you in this everyday work for the good of the Church, I can see how you give all your resources without sparing yourself, without sparing your health. I can see how devotedly you carry out God’s service. I admire you and try to emulate you as much as I can’.

Metropolitan Hilarion presented Patriarch Kirill with a crozier made after the old pattern.

Patriarchal Press Service/
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