His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrates thanksgiving at the Cathedral of the Trinity in St. Daniel's Monastery on the occasion of DECR 70th anniversary



The Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR) celebrated its 70th anniversary on May 19, 2016. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia celebrated thanksgiving at the Cathedral of the Trinity in St. Daniel's Stavropegic Monastery.

Prayers were offered for the DECR staff members during the service.

After it, His Holiness addressed the worshippers with his primatial homily, congratulating all on the remarkable event and reminding them of the fact that the 'Department began its work during the Great Patriotic War when a small group of people was formed with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Sergy for contacts with the outside world.

‘The visit to Moscow of Archbishop of York, the second in rank of the Church of England was a dramatic and unprecedented event of a symbolic nature, but showing that not only governments and allied armies were united by an idea to defeat the enemy, but also Christians of East and West.

‘The Department was set up in 1946 with many tasks to fulfill, one of them being the development of relations with the Local Orthodox Churches, and another – care for the Russian Orthodox Christians living abroad…

‘Each epoch brought about new problems and challenges. They are of global nature nowadays. The most difficult to meet is a change in attitude to the faith and Christianity in many countries of Europe and America. The Orthodox must defend their faith and the Church of Christ and be faithful to the Tradition.

‘Today our Church enjoys support of people and public organizations. We maintain a constructive dialogue with the state authorities, and this helps to resolve many problems including those on the DECR’s agenda. We thank God for the new opportunities that have appeared in the changed socio-political situation in the country, and we understand great responsibility for the results of our work. Therefore, any administrative, political, diplomatic, cultural and other kinds of the seemingly secular activity should be conducted with sincere prayer and support of bishops and laymen.

His Holiness presented Metropolitan Hilarion with an inscribed *panagia,* and Archpriest Nikolai Balashov and Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov) with the crosses with an inscription ‘in consideration of zealous work for the good of the Holy Church and in connection with the 70th anniversary of the DECR.’ The DECR was given a Vladimir icon of the Mother of God.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/49523/