



Holy Synod points to historic nature of meeting between Patriarch Kirill and Pope Francis in Havana and approves their Joint Statement

At its session on April 16, 2016, in the historic building of the Sacred Governing Synod in St. Petersburg, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, chaired by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, heard His Holiness's report on his visit to Latin America (Minutes No. 2) and his meeting with Pope Francis of Rome, which took place at Jose Marti Airport during that visit.

As a result of the meeting, a Joint Statement was signed calling the world community to take urgent measures for preventing the genocide of Christians in the Middle East, to effective peace efforts and social solidarity in Ukraine, stressing the need for cooperation in defending the Christian foundations of the European civilization and values of the traditional family as well as the inalienable right to life and respect for human dignity.

The Holy Synod pointed to the historic nature of the Havana meeting between Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and Pope Francis of Rome and approved the Joint Statement they signed as its result.

The Holy Synod also regarded as important the Joint Statement's call to the international community 'to undertake every possible effort to end terrorism through common, joint and coordinated action'.

The Synod was gratified to note that this call was heard in broad social and political circles and expressed hope for further consolidation of the forces struggling against international terrorism.

The members of the Synod deemed timely the concern expressed in the Joint Statement for the situation developing in the countries 'in which Christians are increasingly confronted by restrictions to religious freedom, to the right to witness to one's convictions and to live in conformity with them' and for the 'current curtailment of the rights of Christians, if not their outright discrimination, when certain political forces, guided by an often very aggressive secularist ideology, seek to relegate them to the margins of public life'.

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