



## **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill: Antarctica has special spiritual significance for the whole world**

On February 17, 2016, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia visited the Bellingshausen Station on Waterloo Island in Antarctica. In the common room of the station Patriarch Kirill met with the Russian expedition crew and with numerous members of other expeditions, including the explorers from the Chilean, Chinese and other stations.

"There is something that makes Antarctica a very important and significant place for the entire humanity," His Holiness said. "This is the only continent without weapons, without any military activities, where no researches aimed at creating new means of destruction are conducted. And whatever country they represent, all polar explorers are a family. They lend each other a helping hand when needed and selflessly share their resources. It is an image of a perfect humanity which proves that people are able to live in this way, without borders, without weapons, without hatred, but cooperate and feel like the members of one family."

"A Russian church built in Antarctica is named in honor of the Holy Trinity," Patriarch Kirill continued to say. "The Trinity is revealed to us as a perfect image of unity. The first church in Russia dedicated to the Holy Trinity was built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when the country consisted of many fragmented warring feudal principalities. The consequences of this division were tragic: the country was occupied for over two hundred years. But a monk named Sergius built a church in honor of the Holy Trinity in a dense forest close to Moscow and said the words that have become a motto of the unification of Russia: "To overcome the hateful discord of this world by beholding the unity of the Holy Trinity."

"It is remarkable that the church of the Holy Trinity is located in Antarctica, where the explorers overcome "the hateful discord of this world" by their life and work. Antarctica is a place of a really special spiritual and humanitarian significance for the planet. I thank you for the example that you are giving to the world. I am really happy that I was able to witness your common life. May the Lord help each and all to keep this Antarctic brotherhood and to work for the benefit of the entire humanity," Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia said in conclusion of his speech.