



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill emphasizes the necessity to establish effective system of distant learning at seminaries

In his report to the Bishops' Council, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia focused, among other things, on the reorganization of the system of theological education.

"This issue has been on the agenda of almost every session of the Supreme Church Council since 2013. Our principal goal was to ensure uniformity in bachelor's degree programmes at seminaries and to improve the quality of education," the Primate of the Russian Church said, "In 2015 a working group led by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk developed a uniform curriculum for bachelor's degree programmes that was later approved by the Holy Synod."

As His Holiness noted, educational institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church have been applying this curriculum since September 2015. At the same time, the ROC Education Committee continues its activities for optimizing the system of theological educational institutions.

The work aimed at compiling and publishing coursebooks for seminaries is being currently carried out by an ad-hoc working group led by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill also spoke about master's degree programmes "aimed at preparing academic scholars, teachers and lecturers, as well as administrative officers." The majority of master's students today receive education in such traditional spheres as practical theology, theology, history and Bible studies. Some educational institutions offer new master's courses, for instance, Greek Christian Literature, History of Church Art, etc.

"The best graduates continue their education at institutes of postgraduate studies. The reform process has affected this level as well. Thus, Sts Cyril and Methodius Theological Institute of Postgraduate Studies is currently preparing normative documents pertaining to the theological education on this level.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill also spoke on the reorganization of theological schools. The Primate reminded the participants in the Bishops' Council that in 2013 the Holy Synod gave theological schools a three-year period to reorganize themselves into seminaries or educational centres preparing specialists for parishes in mission, catechization, social and youth ministry.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church also emphasized “the necessity to establish an effective system of distant learning at seminaries or other forms of distant education” and commissioned the Education Committee to continue its work in this sphere.

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