Patriarch Kirill: The Pan-Orthodox Council's document on Sacrament of Marriage called to respond to challenges threatening institution of family in modern world

Informing the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church on the progress of preparations for the Pan-Orthodox Council, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia mentioned in particular the Council's draft documents on the Sacrament of Marriage and Its Impediments. This draft document, among others, was essentially revised by the Synaxis of the Primates of Local Orthodox Churches which took place in January 2016.

Previously it was entitled as 'On Impediments to Marriage', which fully reflected its content. Drafted as far back as the 80s, it really was no more than a bare list of the degrees of consanguinity and circumstances in which marriage was not permitted by canons. 'Our Church has repeatedly called to actualize this text by setting forth the church teaching on marriage as the union of man and woman and responding to the challenges which threaten the institution of the family in the modern world', His Holiness stressed.

He indicated that the meeting of the Special Inter-Orthodox Commission and the 5th Pan-Orthodox Pre-Council Conference took these proposals into account only partially. However, for the most participants in the recent Synaxis of the Primates, it became clear that this document needed further revision. 'As a result, the text was considerably supplemented and improved, which made it possible for us to sign it', the Patriarch stated.

Nevertheless, the draft document did not suit all the Local Orthodox Churches, and Patriarchates of Antioch and Georgia refused to sign it. The further fate of this document will be determined in the course of inter-Orthodox consultations before the Council.

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