



Holy Synod begins its session chaired by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill

On 24 December 2015, the last session of this year of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church at the Synodal hall of the Patriarchal and Synodal residence in St Daniel's Monastery in Moscow under the chairmanship of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church addressed the Synod's members, saying: 'Your Eminences, Your Graces! We are opening the last of this year session of the Holy Synod. As usual, in the end of the year we ponder over the past and think about the future, first of all about the Bishops' Council which will summarize our common work done during the last years. Our agenda also includes important issues pertaining to the inter-Orthodox relations on which I propose to focus our attention.

The session of the Holy Synod concludes the jubilee year dedicated to the 1000th anniversary of the repose of the Grand Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles. I will present a short report on all events that took place in the dioceses and metropolitan area of our Church in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. I believe that the report will allow us to see the deep interest displayed by our believers to the jubilee. Also, I think that the celebration had a great spiritual meaning: Prince Vladimir again inspired his people's life, and there is no doubt that the jubilee has helped many to realize the importance of faith in Christ in their life.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill greeted His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and all Ukraine with the 25th anniversary of his episcopal consecration and presented him with a cross, panagia and congratulatory address.

The list of permanent members of the Holy Synod includes Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine; Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna; Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and All Moldova; Metropolitan Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan, head of the metropolitan area in the Republic of Kazakhstan; Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Uzbekistan, head of the Central Asia metropolitan area; Metropolitan Varsonofy of St. Petersburg and Ladoga, Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Zaslavl, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus; and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations.

Invited to take part in the winter session (September-February) are Metropolitan Isidor of Smolensk and

Roslavl, Archbishop Feodor of Mukachevo and Uzhgorod, Bishop Markell of Beltsy and Felesht, Bishop Ioann of Magadan and Sinegorje, and Bishop Varlaam of Makhachkala and Grozny.

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