



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

First in 2015 session of the Holy Synod takes place under chairmanship of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill

On 5 May 2-15, the first in 2015 session of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church began its work under chairmanship of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia at the Patriarchal and Synodal resident in St. Daniel's Monastery.

His Holiness greeted members of the Holy Synod with a Paschal greeting 'Christ is Risen!' and presented the agenda. He said: 'Our meeting takes place during Paschal days and I hope that the light of Resurrection and Paschal joy will make us wiser and stronger when we take decisions on a number of important and difficult questions.'

His Holiness informed the audience that they would consider the results of the Bishops' Conference held on 2-3 February 2015, confirm plans and reports of the Synodal institutions, the minutes of the Synods

of the Metropolitan areas in Kazakhstan and in Central Asia and of the visit to Russia of His Beatitude Patriarch John of Antioch, and summarize the results of the 23rd International Christmas Readings.

Also, members of the Synod will discuss the problems pertaining to humanitarian aid to refugees from the south-east of Ukraine.

Metropolitan Hilarion will present a report on the meeting of the Inter-Orthodox Commission for Preparing the Pan-Orthodox Council, inform the Synod about the canonization of St. Paisios of Mount Athos by the Church of Constantinople, about a delegation to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain to celebrate the commemoration day of St. Panteleimon the Great Martyr and Healer, and about the establishment of a Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church.

Also considered will be the activities of the Coordinating Centre for the development of theology in the Russian Orthodox Church and of the Diocesan Council for theological education, as well as the change of Trustees of the Patriarchal Prize for Literature.

Metropolitan Varsonofy of St. Petersburg and Ladoga will report on the service to St. Luke (Voynoyasenetsky), on the office of the blessing of the aged couples married for a long time and on the Christian burial of the dead.

Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Zaslavl will report on the opening of the Post-Graduate Studies Department at the Minsk Theological Academy.

Metropolitan Varsonofy will read out the report on the placement of graduates of the theological educational institutions and on the appointment of some bishops as archimandrites of monasteries, on the opening of new monasteries and convents and appointment of hegumens and hegumenesses.

His Holiness the Patriarch will deliver a report on the activities of the Representation of the Moscow Patriarchate in Germany and of other institutions abroad.