



## **Primate of Russian Church celebrates Paschal Great Vespers at Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow**



On 12 April 2015, the feast of the Radiant Resurrection of Christ, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia celebrated Paschal Great Vespers at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow.

Concelebrating with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill was an assembly of hierarchs and clergymen of the Russian Orthodox Church and ordained representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches.

Praying at the service were representatives of the Synodal institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church, hegumennesses, deans of church districts and rectors of the Moscow churches, clerics of Moscow and the Moscow region, members of the Moscow parish councils, representatives of the Moscow Orthodox youth organizations, pilgrims and parishioners.

During the service, an old Gospel, dating back to the time of Empress Elizaveta Petrovna, was brought

out from the sanctuary. The Gospel, which is used for Christmas and Paschal Great Vespers, was bequeathed by the late Metropolitan Pitirim (Nechaev) to the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour and was transferred there from the Monastery of St Joseph of Volokolamsk.

After Paschal Vespers, Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna greeted His Holiness Patriarch Kirill with the radiant feast of Pascha on behalf of the whole Russian Orthodox Church and representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church addressed the worshippers with a primatial homily, saying in particular:

“I would like to cordially thank all of you for this common prayer on the first day of Pascha. We glorify the Risen Christ and His victory over evil, over the devil. It was the victory over evil on the global, cosmic and eternal scale. And when we say that everyone who believes in Christ, accepts His word, preaches Him and tries to live in accordance with this word concelebrates this victory, we proclaim the great truth that we, together with Christ, overcome evil.

“God’s salutary Pascha was preceded by the Passion. The whole life of Christ was a feat. Feat always requires sacrifice. There are no heroic deeds without sacrifices, sometimes even at the cost of life, as it was during the formidable years of the Great Patriotic War (this year we celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of victory in that war).

“And now we have to ask a very important and hard question: has the society, which sees comfort, tranquility and satisfaction of its needs as its main goals, preserved in its value system an idea of the sacrifice-based feat? Something amazing is going on: the modern civilization seems to impose on people this value system, which does not include neither a feat, nor a sacrifice, nor death. However, the idea of feat and sacrifice lives in people’s minds and hearts and is present in their lives.

“Today, a couple of hours before the service, I had a wonderful talk with our cosmonauts. I saw them, an international team consisting of three Russian Orthodox cosmonauts and one foreign Catholic astronaut, celebrating God’s Pascha their own way. They even dressed in T-shirts of red Paschal colour, thus showing that they are also celebrating the feast. Looking at the faces of these people who will have to spend the whole year in orbit, in a confined space, and to do a very dangerous work, I thought that it is also a feat and a sacrifice.

“Preaching Christ, we must help modern people realize that they should not give their souls up to the ideas which do not fit in the life-asserting and victorious value system. Then we, as persons, as societies, as nations, will be able to commit great deeds and win great victories. Peace will last while

these values remain a part of people's lives."

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