Primates of the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches celebrate at the Cathedral of St. Sabbas of Serbia



On 16 November 2014, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia celebrated Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of St. Sabbas in Belgrade.

Concelebrating were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Archbishop Michael of Geneva and West Europe; Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administrative Secretariat; hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church; archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR vice-chairman; archpriest Savo B. Jović, chief secretary of the Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church; archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations; abbots of the Serbian monasteries and clerics of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Attending the divine service were President Tomislav Nikolić of the Republic of Serbia; Mr. Ivica Dačić,

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia; Mr. Nenad Popović, first deputy chairman of Skupština – the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia; members of the government of Serbia; ambassadors of Russia, Belarus and Cyprus; Major General Mladjian Nišević, a representative of the General Staff of the Ministry of Defence of Serbia; Rev. Slajian Vlajić, chief chaplain of the Serbian Ministry of Defence; and representatives of the Roman Catholic Church: Mgr. Orlando Antonini, Apostolic Nuncio in Belgrade, and Archbishop Stanislav Hoćevar of Belgrade.

The Belgrade Male Choir, the Choir of the Cathedral of St. Sabbas, 'Srbadia' Choir from Bijeljina, Republika Srpska, and Choir 'Obilić', Belgrade, sang at the service.

The Divine service, praying at which were several thousand believers, was broadcast live on RTS TV channel.

After the Liturgy His Holiness Patriarch Irinej greeted His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and all those attending the service. He spoke of the special historical bond between the peoples of Serbia and Russia. 'We would not have survived in hard times without comprehensive help from the Tsarist Russia and the Russian Church,' he said. After the Revolution Serbia has become the second homeland for many emigrants from Russia, including the renowned hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church and workers of science and culture. One can find many Russian graves in all corners of Serbia which also speak of our indissoluble unity.

His Holiness Patriarch Irinej expressed his gratitude to Russia and the Russian Church 'for selfless love of the Serbian Church and people during the recent civil war in former Yugoslavia, and especially for support in healing the deep wound in the land of Kosovo and Metohija,' His Holiness Irinej added.

According to him, conflict in Ukraine pains people in Serbia. 'Our people pray for the end of fratricide in the fraternal Ukraine and for the healing of all wounds on the body of the Holy Kievan Rus', the Serbian Patriarch said.

His Holiness Irinej presented His Holiness Patriarch Kirill with the highest award of the Serbian Orthodox Church – the Order of St. Sabbas, 1st class, and an icon of the Mother of God, panagias and a cross.

The primate of the Russian Orthodox Church warmly thanked His Holiness and addressed all those present in the cathedral.

An icon of the Mother of God called 'Comfort and Consolation' and a particle of the relics of St. Alexander Nevsky were gift of Patriarch Kirill to the Serbian Orthodox Church.

After the service, the Patriarchs and the Serbian President Tomislav Nikolić saw the Church of St. Lazarus of Serbia located in the crypt of the Cathedral of St. Sabbas.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/50901/