His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with Ambassador of Spain to Russia, Jose Ignacio Karbahalem Garate

On 29 October 2014, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with H. E. Jose Ignacio Karbahalem Garate, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain to the Russian Federation.

They were joined in the meeting, which took place at the Patriarchal and Synodal residence in St. Daniel's Monastery in Moscow, by archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), vice-chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, and Mr. Miguel Palacio, a staff member of the DECR secretariat for far abroad countries.

While greeting Ambassador Garate, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill noted the traditionally good attitude of the Russian people to Spain, recalled that a Russian Orthodox parish dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene had been established in Madrid in the 18th century and added that in the 20th century Russian emigrants became members of the parish formed as a home church in the apartments of the Grand Duke Georgy Bagration-Mukhransky.

His Holiness continued to say^ 'It functioned during many years before a parish opened to everybody was established and named after Mary Magdalene as the first parish in Madrid. As the head of foreign relations of the Russian Church, I took part in the process and visited Spain. I recall with gratitude the fact that our petitions for allotting a plot of land for the construction of the church were met.'

There are nine parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in Spain. The Russian-speaking people constitute the most part of the parishioners, but one can meet Orthodox Spaniards among them. Also, several clergymen are Spaniards.

Ambassador Garate thanked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill for the meeting, saying that this opportunity was a privilege. Discussed at meeting were questions of pastoral care for the Russian Orthodox Christians living in Spain, cooperation between the Roman Catholic Church and the Russian Orthodox Church, and the crisis of traditional Christian values in Europe.

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