# Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church conducts litiya for His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev

On 6 July 2014, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia celebrated Divine Liturgy at Smolensk Cathedral of the Smolensk icon of the Mother of God in the Novodevichy Convent, offered special prayers for peace in Ukraine and the Litany for the newly departed Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine.

After the Divine Liturgy Patriarch Kirill conducted a Litiya for Metropolitan Vladimir and addressed the worshippers with his primatial word, sharing his recollections of the deceased archpastor.

‘I have known Metropolitan Vladimir for over forty-nine years. We maintained contacts as co-workers, and I delighted with his style of work and relations with people.

‘Metropolitan Vladimir was my predecessor as rector of the Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Geneva. While handing over the administration to me he smiled and said that the church was small and not many people come, as they were afraid to do it. It was a time of the cold war. However, he added, there was a group of the brave parishioners coming to the church of the Moscow Patriarchate. I came to Geneva and understood that it was Metropolitan Vladimir who had brought the parish into being. He united people of the first emigration in the parish and they cherished recollections of his time with them. He was indeed a great pastor, a wonderful preacher, an excellent company and a very good friend.

‘During the years when he was rector of the Moscow Theological Academy, and I was rector of the St. Petersburg Academy, we exchanged our views as the like-minded people caring for the development of theological education in our country.

‘Metropolitan Vladimir’s talents were brightly revealed at the Kiev See to which he was elected at the hardest moment in the history of the Orthodox Ukraine. In 1992 a schism was provoked under the influence of political forces who wanted to subdue the whole Ukraine. The majority of our bishops, except two (one of theme was retired), did not support the schismatics, united around Metropolitan Vladimir and preserved the canonical Orthodoxy in Ukraine. His Beatitude had to be strong and wise to keep the Church and unite the Ukrainian people. The Church has united people of different political views or views on history, way of life or customs in spite of the bloodshed and military confrontation, and I thank God for this peacemaking endeavour of our Church is bringing to people witness about Christ who is our peace.

‘His Beatitude passed away yesterday morning. I learned about it immediately and conducted the Litiya for him. I prayed and recalled the life of he outstanding hierarchs of the Orthodox Church, our contacts and his service to Orthodoxy in Ukraine for the keeping of which we pray to God. We believe that Metropolitan Vladimir will intercede for us, and we on the earth will work for the unity of the Church. We believe that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church will continue its witness about the crucified and risen Christ, calling people to live by the divine law thus acquiring the true freedom. Amen.’

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