



## **Patriarch Kirill meets with a delegation of the Patriarchate of Constantinople**

On May 24, 2014, the commemoration day of Ss Cyril and Methodius, which is also his name-day, His Holiness Patriarchal Kirill of Moscow and All Russia received a delegation of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, who have come to Russia for the celebrations. The delegation includes Metropolitan Andreas of Arkalochori, Kastelli and Viannos, Bishop Nicephorus of Amoria, abbot of the Vlatadon Stavropegic Monastery, and Archdeacon Timotheos Tsismalidis.

In attendance were Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, a vice-chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations, Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations, and Archpriest Mikhail Asmus, DECR staff member.

The guests presented the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church with a gift from His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople. It was an icon of St. Sophia (Hortokoridou), a newly-glorified Greek saint, a nun of the Kleisoura convent in northern Greece. The name of the Righteous Sophia has been included in the Russian Orthodox Church calendar by the Holy Synod decision of June 6-7, 2012.

His Holiness thanked the delegation for the congratulations and participation in the celebrations. “I would like to convey the words of sincere gratitude to His Holiness Patriarchate Bartholomew. It is significant that we exchange delegations on the name-days of the two Patriarchs. It is very important to celebrate together the Divine Liturgy and to partake of one Cup”. He gave assurance of his prayers for the Primate of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and success of his service as going on in a very difficult situation.

Among the questions discussed during the meeting, which was held in an atmosphere of fraternal understanding, was the life of Orthodoxy and preservation of its canonical traditions. Patriarch Kirill spoke with pain about the suffering of the Ukrainian people, the need to protect their traditional spiritual values and the norms of Christian morality being destroyed in many countries of Western Europe, noting that many Europeans do not agree with this path of development but their voice is not heard by political leaders.

They also discussed prospects of the Pan-Orthodox Council. “Now is the time for us to be together as one Orthodox family”, Patriarch Kirill stressed, “We have to be strong, united and capable of speaking out in one voice before the world. Please, convey my love to His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew. We have known each other since youth and wended through life together for long years”,

As a gift to Patriarch Bartholomew, Patriarch Kirill conveyed an encolpion produced on the occasion of the 700<sup>th</sup> birthday of St. Sergius of Radonezh.

Speaking on behalf of the delegation, Metropolitan Andreas, said that he shared His Holiness Kirill's concern over the crisis in the Western world. "We use this word "crisis" out of love for our Western brothers and pray that they may come to senses and return to the true path in Christ", he said.

He also said, that "the fraternal love that the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has for you cannot be doubted" and asked Patriarch Kirill's prayers "so that our Patriarchate may walk supported by the love of the Ss Brothers Cyril and Methodius of Thessaloniki".

Patriarch Kirill, on his part, noted that the mission among the Slavs goes back of the Holy Patriarch Photius and Brothers Cyril and Methodius Equal-to-the-Apostles, who were sent by him. "We remember this. This is an important fundamental part of the history of our faith", he said.

*DECR Communication Service*

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