Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk attends round-table conference on the 5th anniversary of the enthronement of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia



On January 31, 2014, a round-table conference devoted to the 5th anniversary of the enthronement of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia took place at Moscow State University's Chapel of St. Tatiana.

It was attended by heads of the ROC Synodal departments, committees and services, professors and students as well as representatives of the mass media. It was chaired by Mr. A. Shchipkov, editor-in-chief of the Religion and the Mass Media portal, an expert in state-religion relations.

The meeting was opened by Metropolitan Hilarion who spoke about the work of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill as Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church in her canonical space outside the Russian Federation and in the canonical space of other Local Orthodox Churches.

Prof. A. Volkov, head of the MSU Faculty of Philology's Chair of Comparative Linguistics, shared his reflections on Patriarch Kirill's oratorical skills, using as an example the sermon His Holiness delivered on January 25, 2014, the commemoration day of St. Tatiana, at the MSU chapel, and noting that "the most difficult thing for me as a teacher is to make students speak what needs to be said, not what they want to say. We can see this skill displayed by the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church".

Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, chairman of the Synodal Department for Church-Society Relations, related the participation of His Holiness Kirill in socio-political processes and in debates on socially significant problems and his ability to advocate the Church's stand in difficult negotiations with various people in various situations. "His Holiness's experience of participation in international public debates and advocacy of the Christendom's position on socially significant issues amounts to several decades. In the 80s, in the 90s and in the beginning of the 2000s, he has exerted tremendous efforts to build church-state relations in the Soviet Union and later in the Russian Federation. This experience of difficult and very successful negotiations, in which he has managed to form to a great extent a system of church-state and church-society relations in Russia, has helped His Holiness to acquire the skill to win and the skill to reach agreement", he said with confidence.

Mr. V. Legoida, head of the Synodal Information Department, noted that among the main results of Patriarch Kirill's work since he was elected to the patriarchal throne was the fact that the mass media and the blogosphere have moved themes linked with the work of the Russian Orthodox Church and generally religious themes from periphery to the center. He stressed that "the indisputable result of the discussion on even such topics which can be called resonant is that today, in the beginning of the 21st century, we in our public discussion concentrate on such things as what it means to be a Christian in today's world, what an evangelical action is – all that some time ago was discussion in church circles alone is now discussed by federal periodicals and federal TV networks".

Archimandrite Savva (Tutonov), deputy chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, explained to the audience the administrative reforms carried out in the Russian Orthodox Church, particularly, the establishment of new Synodal departments, the Inter-Council Presence, the Supreme Church Council and new dioceses.

Archpriest Maxim Kozlov, first vice-chairman of the ROC Education Committee, spoke of the reform of the theological education in the Russian Orthodox Church, achievements and problems facing the theological schools, the efforts to form a single educational space and church initiatives aimed to raise the level of the religious education of the laity. "All our seminaries have in fact shifted to the training for Bachelor's degree. The best of them run MA courses, and theological centers have introduced post-graduate studies. This three-step education system adopted by the 2011 Bishops' Council is correspondent to that of the secular higher education, which allows us to keep in the context of the

development of higher school as it should be in the beginning of the 21st century", he stressed.

Deacon Alexander Volkov, head of the Patriarchal Press Service, presented statistics characterising the work of His Holiness Kirill, such as the number of services celebrated by him for the five years of his patriarchal office, episcopal consecrations, visits made by him to dioceses. "Standing behind all these numbers is the future of our Church. For the 1825 days of his ministry, the Patriarch celebrated 1132 divine services. This figure reflects how the Patriarch understands his life as Primate of a Church. This life is based on the liturgy and prayer together with his people, his flock. For the Patriarch, it is the most important thing, and anyone who attended a patriarchal service at least once does not need to be convinced of it".

Participants also answered questions from journalists.

Archpriest Vladimir Vigilyansky, rector of the Chapel of St. Tatiana, summed up the round table discussion. "The five years of the patriarchal office have shown that Patriarch Kirill has become not only the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church but also a leader of the nation. The evangelization of today's world is the primary direction in Patriarch's work, the task of his mission as Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church".

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