



before which the ancient people of Kiev bowed their heads. There is no other force that would unite people, generations, countries and nations both 'horizontally' and 'vertically' and yet this ideal has no support either in power or political authority. It is only God's power and God's spiritual force – grace that unites people and forms this unity'.

Among visible expressions of this unity, Patriarch Kirill said, is participation of Heads and representatives of Local Orthodox Churches in the festivities. They represent the Orthodox Church from end to end of the earth. He underscored the great spiritual and symbolical significance of the common celebration of the Divine Liturgy in Moscow, Kiev and Minsk, when the prayer lifted up by the Heads and representatives of their Churches at the same altar of God united millions and millions of people.

Mentioning with gratitude the great contribution made by the heads of the three states, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, to the arrangement of the celebrations, Patriarch Kirill said, 'We pray that the fraternal relations that united these three peoples may never weaken, so that no force could destroy our unity which goes back to St. Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles – the unity which has proved its vitality through the 1025 years'.

Patriarch Kirill awarded a number of persons who made a considerable contribution to the organization of the celebrations in Belarus. He presented Byelorussian Deputy Prime Minister A. Tozik and the Commissioner for Religious Affairs L. Gulyako with the Order of St. Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles, 3d degree. The chairman of the Minsk Regional Executive Committee, Mr. B. Batura, and the Chairman of the Minsk Municipal Executive Committee, N. Ladutko, were awarded the order of Glory and Honour, 3d degree.

*DECR Communication Service*