



## **Primates of Local Orthodox Churches celebrate the Liturgy in Minsk Old Town**

The celebration of the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Russia continued in the capital of Byelorussia. On 29 July 2013, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, together with the Primates and representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches, celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the Minsk Old Town, where the first church in Minsk was founded in the 11th century.

Celebrating the Liturgy were His Beatitude Patriarch Theodore II of Alexandria and All Africa; His Beatitude Patriarch Theofilos III of the Holy City of Jerusalem and All Palestine; His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia; His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia; His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos II of New Justiniana and All Cyprus; His Beatitude Metropolitan Sava of Warsaw and All Poland; His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon of All America and Canada; as well as Metropolitan Antonio of Mexico, Venezuela, Central America and the Caribbean, head of the delegation of the Patriarchate of Antioch; Metropolitan Prokopios of Philippi, Neapolis and Thasos, head of the Secretariat for Inter-Orthodox Relations of the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church and the head of the delegation of the Greek Orthodox Church; Metropolitan John of Korça, head of the delegation of the Albanian Orthodox Church; Archbishop Rostislav of Prešov, head of the delegation of the Orthodox Church of Czech Lands and Slovakia; and members of the delegations of the Local Orthodox Churches.

Concelebrating the Divine Liturgy were Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarchal Exarch for All Belarus; Metropolitan Yuvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna; Metropolitan Vladimir of Chişinău and All Moldova; Metropolitan Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan, head of the metropolitan area in the Republic of Kazakhstan; Metropolitan Vikentiy of Tashkent and Uzbekistan, head of the metropolitan area in Central Asia; Metropolitan Varsonofiy of Saransk and Mordovia, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; hierarchs and clergymen of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Praying at the Divine Service were representatives of the Belarusian authorities, as well as tens of thousands of worshippers from all over Belarus and pilgrims from Russia, Latvia and Lithuania.

During the service, liturgical exclamations were made in Church Slavonic, Greek, Arabic, English, Georgian, and Albanian.

A thanksgiving to the Holy Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles was said after the Liturgy.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia delivered a homily on the occasion of the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Russia.

His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos-Patriarch Ilia II of Georgia greeted the worshippers, saying in particular: “We cannot content ourselves with what we have achieved. We should think about the future, we should think how to preserve our spiritual and cultural values. We live in a time when everything is changing and the values can lose their significance. Our duty is to preserve our Orthodox Church and our faith. In order to preserve them, we should think about the future and about our youth... The Church needs to develop her ties with Family and School. It will help us to exert salutary influence on our youth which is beginning to understand the importance of the Church. We live in a time when our churches are full of young people and we should respond to each question they ask. May the Lord help us and grant us wisdom to guide our Churches and our people.”

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