



## **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with delegation of Albanian Orthodox Church**

On 26 July 2013, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with Metropolitan John of Korça and Rev. Mikhail Sanellari, representatives of the Albanian Orthodox Church at the celebration of the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Russia.

Taking part in the meeting were also Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR vice-chairman; Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations; and Mr. Dmitry Petrovsky, DECR staff member.

His Holiness greeted the guests and expressed his joy at seeing the delegation of the Albanian Orthodox Church among the participants in the celebration promoting the unity of the Orthodox Churches.

Speaking about recent events in the life of the Orthodox faithful in Albania, Patriarch Kirill mentioned the consecration of the Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in the centre of Tirana, which took place in June 2012. As His Holiness noted, that event showed the complete revival of the Albanian Church, her parish life and church ministry.

"The mission of Ss Cyril and Methodius, founders of the Albanian Church, have united us," His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said.

The head of the delegation of the Albanian Orthodox Church expressed his joy over the opportunity to take part in the celebration marking the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Russia. Speaking about recent changes in the life of the Albanian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan John of Korça said, "Ten years ago we could not even dream of constructing the Cathedral."

The participants in the meeting also discussed the situation in Kosovo.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia presented the members of the delegation of the Albanian Orthodox Church with the awards of the Russian Orthodox Church: Metropolitan John of Korça – with the Order of the Holy Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles (2nd class), and Rev. Mikhail Sanellari - with the Order of the Holy Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles (3rd class).

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