



## **The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church meets in session chaired by Patriarch Kirill**

March 12, 2013, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church has met for a regular session at the Synod's Hall at the synodal and patriarchal residence in the St. Daniel Monastery, Moscow. It is chaired by His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

The permanent members of the Holy Synod are Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine, Vladimir of St. Petersburg and Ladoga, Filaret of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarchal Exarch for all Belarus; Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna, Vladimir of Kishinev and All Moldova, Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan, Vikenty of Tashkent and Uzbekistan, Varsonofy of Saransk and Mordovia, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; and Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Department for External Church Relations.

Summoned for the summer session (March-August) 2013 are Metropolitan Merkury of Novocheerkassk, Archbishop Mark of Berlin-Germany and Great Britain, Archbishop Dimitry of Vitebsk and Orsha, Archbishop Varfolomey of Rovno and Ostrog, and Bishop Savvaty of Ulan-Ude and Buryatia.

Before the session, Patriarch Kirill awarded Archbishop Varfolomey the Order of St. Seraphim of Sarov in recognition of his zealous archpastoral work and on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Then His Holiness Kirill introduced the Synod to the main items on the agenda.

The Synod will discuss the decisions made by the Supreme Church Council on work reports and plans of synodal departments.

The members of the Synod will also consider preparations for the celebrations on the occasions of the 1025<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Baptism of Russia.

Metropolitan Hilarion will make a report on the work carried out by the Department for External Church Relations.

The Holy Synod is to consider and approve a document on the Russian Orthodox Church's Mission of Service in Prisons and Penitentiaries.

There will be a discussion about a proposal for establishing a Church-Public Council on Perpetuating the Memory of New Martyrs. As Patriarch Kirill remarked, 'It is also necessary to review the membership of the Synodal Commission for Canonizations because some may not be active enough in this work which is to be carried on on a high level'.

In accordance with the Statute of the Publishing Board, the Synod will also consider rotation in the memberships of this body.

Patriarch Kirill also said that the Synod is to make a general evaluation of sessions held by the Synod of the Byelorussian Exarchate and the Synod of the Central Asia Metropolitan Region, to consider several appointments to synodal departments, to make a decision on the opening of monasteries and appointment of abbots and abbesses and to establish new metropolitan regions and dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church.

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