



## **Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church took place on 2-5 February 2013**

The Bishops' Council, which numbers 290 hierarchs, took place at the Hall of Church Councils in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour from February 2 through 5 with 280 hierarchs participating. 88 of them were consecrated during the last four years. The Council adopted some Regulations and issued an Appeal to the clergymen, monastics and laymen of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Witnessing the unity of the Russian Orthodox Church, hierarchs from 247 dioceses of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Latvia, Lithuania, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Estonia, and from dioceses in some far abroad countries arrived to take part in the Council.

February 1 marked the fourth anniversary of the enthronement of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. All archpastors of the Russian Orthodox Church lead by its Primate celebrated Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour.

That same day, participants in the Bishops' Council met with the Russian President Vladimir Putin and discussed the key issues of the relations between the Church and the state. President Putin highly appreciated the Russian Orthodox Church's work and answered questions asked by the bishops.

On February 2, the first day of the Council's work, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia delivered a report on the life and activities of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Primate spoke at length of different aspects on church life and church-state and church-society relations in all canonical territory of the Russian Orthodox Church. He also spoke of the new dioceses and the establishment of metropolias, the life of parishes abroad, financial and economic activities, theological education, youth, missionary and social ministry, information, and dialogue of the Church with society and the state. Patriarch Kirill shared his vision of inter-Orthodox and inter-Christian relations, and of cooperation with representatives of other religions.

The participants heard a report of His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine with an assessment of the situation of canonical Orthodoxy in Ukraine at present.

The Inter-Council Presence presented a number of documents for consideration of the Council. They were unanimously adopted.

A new wording of the Statute of the Russian Orthodox Church was approved with amendments.

The Bishops' Council took a decision on the church-wide glorification of St. Dalmat of Iset, earlier glorified as a locally venerated saint of Siberia.

Adopted by the Council were Regulations for material and social support of priests, church workers and staff of religious organizations of the Russian Orthodox Church and of members of their families and Regulations for the awards of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The current membership of the General Ecclesiastical Court was unanimously approved for a new term.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour on all days of the Council's work with prayers of fervent supplications for its success.

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