



Patriarch Kirill attends the Slavic Unity Festival – 2012 at the border of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine

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On June 30, 2012, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia attended the opening of the Slavic Unity – 2012, an international festival of Slavic nations. This year it was held under the motto 'The Future to Be Built by the Youth'. It is the second time that the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church attends the festival at the Three Sisters, a monument at the border of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine.

His Holiness arrived at the meeting place of the Russian delegation by helicopter.

The festivities began with a march of Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian columns to the Friendship Monument decorated with traditional symbols of the three fraternal nations. Then the columns met at the Byelorussian side of the monument. Girls in Byelorussian traditional costumes welcomed Patriarch Kirill and governors of the regions of Bryansk and Chernigov with traditional bread and salt.

Patriarch Kirill conducted a prayer service on the occasion of the Slavic Unity Day. He was assisted by a large group of bishops and priests. Special petitions were lifted up for the Slavic peoples. 'Many Years of Life' was sung to 'our great master and father Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, the powers and peoples of the Slavic countries and all the Orthodox Christians present and praying here'.

After a musical and choreographic presentation on 'The Future to Be Built by the Youth' given by youth teams from the three countries, Patriarch Kirill together with the high guests ascended to the upper platform of the monument to declare the festival open. The national flags of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia were raised and their national anthems were played.

Speeches by Russian and Ukrainian officials and dignitaries followed. The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church delivered a closing speech.

The Three Sisters Monument was erected at the crossing place of Byelorussian, Ukrainian and Russian borders in August 1969 which marked the 30th anniversary of the Victory in the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War. The Slavic Unity Festival has been held there annually for over three decades now with the participation of masters of culture, statesmen, representatives of political and economic circles, public and youth from the three fraternal Slavic republics. Responsible for conducting the festival this year is Belarus's Gomel Region.

Patriarchal Press Service

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