Patriarch Kirill's meeting with Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbaev

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On May 29, 2012, upon his arrival in Kazakhstan's capital Astana, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia proceeded to the presidential residence 'Ak-Orda' for a meeting with President N. Nazarbaev.

Warmly welcoming His Holiness, President Nazarbaev said that Patriarch Kirill's first official visit to his country in January 2010 was very memorable for him. It was a special honour for him to be decorated with the Russian Orthodox Order of Glory and Honour.

Mr. Nazarbaev expressed the conviction that the participation of the Primate of the Russian Church in the 4th Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions to take place next day in Astana raised the authority of the forum and its importance as a unique platform for dialogue.

'The lofty mission of Orthodoxy for strengthening traditional moral values is extremely important for us', he said. Today it is very important to preserve traditions in society and this can be done only by the religions which have strengthened people's faith and spirituality for centuries.

Patriarch Kirill said in response that his visits to Kazakhstan always were a great joy for him and he had good memories of the liturgies he celebrated in Alma-Ata and Astana during his first visit to the country as Primate of the Russian Church.

'I am glad that our agreements to establish a Metropolia have been realized. Now with the establishment of a Metropolia the face of the Orthodoxy in Kazakhstan has changed. This gives a greater authority to the presence of Orthodoxy and, most importantly, corresponds to the historical role of Orthodoxy in Kazakhstan because the two traditional religions, Islam and Orthodoxy, have always been peaceful neighbours in this land', Patriarch Kirill said.

They discussed various aspects of the life of Orthodox believers in Kazakhstan in the light of the fact that a Metropolia has been established in the country. Patriarch Kirill thanked President Nazarbaev for the support the state gave to the Russian Orthodox Church including in constructing a building of the Synod of Kazakhstan Metropolia and the Sts Cyril and Methodius Religious and Cultural Center.

Patriarch Kirill and President Nazarbaev also dealt with the agenda of the forthcoming 4th Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. According to His Holiness, the Russian Orthodox Church attached special importance to the opportunities for dialogue opening up for religious leaders and representatives of world religious traditions by the international forum, which has been conducted under the aegis of the President of Kazakhstan for many years.

After the meeting Patriarch Kirill answered questions from journalists, the Patriarchal Press Service has reported.

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