



## **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrates a prayer service in the Annunciation Cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin on the day of Vladimir Putin's inauguration as President of Russian Federation**

[gallery]

On 7 May 2012, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia celebrated a prayer service on the occasion of Vladimir Putin's inauguration as President of the Russian Federation.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church met the Russian President and his wife at the entrance to the Cathedral of the Annunciation.

After the litany, during which a special prayer was lifted up for Russian President Vladimir Putin, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said a prayer for the head of the Russian state to govern the country in peace and lead it to prosperity.

The text of the prayer service on the occasion of a Russian President's inauguration was written in the years of His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II's primatial ministry. The ever-memorable Primate of the Russian Church led the prayer service three times – in 2000, 2004, and 2008.

After the service, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill addressed Vladimir Putin with the greeting speech, saying in particular:

“Vladimir Vladimirovich, I would like to wholeheartedly congratulate you on the election, as the majority of our people have elected you the President of the Russian Federation consciously, rationally, and according to their free will. Today in this old Kremlin, where many of your pious predecessors heard prayerful exhortations to serve the Motherland, we prayed zealously to God to grant His grace to you and to our country, to give you spiritual and physical strength, wisdom, and all what a man, who is in charge of life and well-being of tens of millions of people, needs.

The legitimacy of a president is based on people's confidence, and you enjoy this confidence. It means that the president's paramount goal is to serve people. To make the service a success one ought to hear the voice of the people. It is not easy. The people's voice can be drowned. It can be stifled by the voices of some well organized groups or individuals who are often willing to identify their own opinion with the

people's opinion. The ability to distinguish between spirits (1 Cor 12:10) and to hear the voice of the people guarantees successful service of the head of state. Today we have been praying for your ability in hearing the voice of the people to grow day by day for the indubitable benefit of our Motherland and of all our people.

Any success is made up of many factors. These are personal qualities, education, and experience. But there is something else, what people for the lack of rational explanation call "luck", the word we do not use in the Church. Nobody knows what luck is. There is no rational description of this word. It is a kind of a gap between the efforts a man makes and an actual result. We use another word for describing this unknown space. We call it God's help. And today we have been praying to God to grant you His gracious and almighty help. We believe that the combination of the Divine grace and human efforts will do much good in your service to the people."

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church presented the President with the old "Lovingkindness" icon of the Mother of God.

Praying at the service were Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna; Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; and Archbishop Yevgeny of Vereya, chairman of the Synodal Education Committee.

Concelebrating with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill were Archpriest Vladimir Divakov, Patriarch's secretary for Moscow, and Archpriest Mikhail Ryazantsev, a sacristan of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. Singing at the prayer service was the Choir of the Moscow Sretensky Stavropegic Monastery, conducted by Nikon Zhila.

Earlier that day His Holiness Patriarch Kirill attended the solemn ceremony of Vladimir Putin's inauguration as President of the Russian Federation in the Grand Kremlin Palace.

Present at the inauguration were also Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna; Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Metropolitan Ignatij of Khabarovsk and the Amur Region; Archbishop Yevgeny of Vereya; schema-archimandrite Iliy (Nozdrin); archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov), secretary of the Patriarchal Council for Culture; archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, chairman of the Synodal Department for Church-Society Relations; and Vladimir Legoida, chairman of the Synodal Information Department.