



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia completes his first official visit to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church

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On 29 April 2012, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia completed his first official visit to Bulgaria. The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church was accompanied by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR); Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administrative Secretariat; Mr. Vladimir Legoida, chairman of the Synodal Information Department; archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR deputy chairman; archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations; protodeacon Vladimir Nazarkin, assistant to the DECR chairman; and M. Kuksov, acting head of His Holiness' private secretariat.

The Primates of the Russian and Bulgarian Orthodox Church met and talked, and concelebrated at the Cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky in Sofia on the Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women, April 28.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill met with the President of Bulgaria Rosen Plevneliev, Speaker of the National Assembly of Bulgaria Tsetska Tsacheva, and Prime Minister Boyko Borisov.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill laid wreaths to the Monument to Russian soldiers – heroes of one of the final battles of the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War in Philippopolis (now Plovdiv), to the Monument of the Russian soldiers, known as Alyosha, on the Hill of Liberation in Plovdiv, and to the Monument of Tsar Liberator Alexander II in Sofia.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill visited the metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church in Sofia and talked with the parishioners.

The Sofia University of Cultural Heritage granted a doctoral degree to the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church. The University Press published the books by His Holiness, *A Pastor's Word and Freedom and Responsibility* in the Bulgarian language.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia was seen off at the airport by Metropolitan Dometian of Vidin, Metropolitan Kyrill of Varna and Veliki Preslav; Metropolitan Galaktion of Stara Zagora; Bishop Ioann of Znepole, vicar of the Patriarch of Bulgaria; and H. E. Yuri Isakov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Bulgaria.