Representative of the Russian Orthodox Church takes part in theological conference held in the oldest university in Scotland

A conference on Orthodox Ecclesiology and Modernity took place on March 17, 2012, at the University of St Andrews, the oldest university in Scotland and one of the oldest universities in the English-speaking world. Among the participants were Prof Petros Vassiliadis, dean of the University of Thessaloniki's faculty of theology, Prof Peter Coleman of the University of Southampton, Deacon Alexey Nesteruk, a lecturer of the Portsmouth University, and other prominent scholars.

Rev. George Zavershinsky, a cleric of the Diocese of Sourozh and dean of the parishes in Scotland and Northern Ireland, took part in the conference with the blessing of the chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations. He delivered a paper on Orthodox Ecclesiology and True Dialogue, in which he underscored the antinomic nature of the Orthodox teaching on the Church and noted that it is the Eucharist that defines the understanding of true dialogue as communion in the presence of God.

Dialogue is authentic when it takes place in the presence of the 'eternal Thee' of God Who shares in it and verifies it. Speaking about the foundations of dialogue between the Church and the state both in the present and historical contexts, Father George cited an example from the recent past of the church-state relation in the Soviet period and reminded the English-speaking audience that this dialogue will be valid only if it is based on common human moral and spiritual values based on the faith in God and His goodness. If the state persecutes faith and denies God, the Church follows her own way always based on the Divine Eucharist, which is true dialogue of love.

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Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/54401/