



Patriarch Kirill meets with acting president of Moldova

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On February 1, 2012, after the Divine Liturgy at the Church of Christ the Savior, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with the acting president of Moldova, Mr. Marian Lupu, and his wife. They were joined in their talk by Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and All Moldova, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, and Mr. A. Negutsa, Moldovan ambassador to Moscow.

Mr. Lupu extended congratulations to the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church on the 3d anniversary of his enthronement as patriarch, saying, 'Your Holiness, for us it is a great pleasure and honor to be with you on this day joyful for all the Orthodox community. I would like to congratulate you, on behalf of our family, leaders of the Republic of Moldova and all the Moldovan people, on the 3d anniversary of your patriarchal enthronement'. He wished His Holiness sound health and strength for many years to continue the mission entrusted him by God.

This mission is important not only in Russia but also in other countries and in the entire Orthodox world, he said and stressed that he remembered the words of Patriarch Kirill that the Church is separated from the state but cannot be separated from society.

'I hope that your visit to our country has left you with very good memories. I would like to inform you that, according to sociological polls, your visit rates as one of the most important events in the last year in the Republic of Moldova. It is the opinion of not only experts but the whole society, the opinion of our fellow citizens. With great love and honor we are looking forward to your visits to our country in the future', he said.

Patriarch Kirill thanked Mr. and Ms Lupu for their participation in the celebrations. He said he remembered his visit to Moldova with warmth. Such visits involve various activities including festive services, meetings with the country's leaders, talks with clergy and the people. If there are very many events in one's life, their details may leave one's memory after some time, he said, 'but I will always remember the warmth of human hearts and sincerity'.

'I experienced a surge of grace when I was in Moldova, and this grace is certainly a result of the life of the devoted and faithful people of Moldova. Through this inner existential experience of mine I would like to say that the difficulties encountered by a country on the political and economic levels cannot be permanent or eternal in the context of such people. The Lord leads us through hardships in order to

make us stronger.

'But the most important thing is that, while going through hardships, one should not destroy oneself by betraying one's values, ideas and principles. The Moldavian people have really preserved their Orthodox faith as the highest value, and it is my profound conviction that, having gone through the difficulties of today, they will come out on a straight and bright path. I am convinced that the Church of Moldova and the whole Russian Orthodox Church will pray for it'.

Addressing his high guest, Patriarch Kirill said, 'I would like you to convey to all the people of Moldova that I love them, that they are my people in the spirit, though not in the blood. These are the people with whom I speak in the same language of prayer and the same language of religious sentiments. This is the most important thing that I have brought from my visit to Moldova'.

Mr. Lupu on his part testified that 'your visit has left a deep impression on the consciousness of the Moldavian people, our society and our country'.

Speaking about the crisis that has hit the Moldavian society, he expressed the opinion that 'all these crises, both political and economic, cannot be compared with a crisis of morality, a crisis of common human values, because if a society is strong in its spirit, faith, culture, education, then it is strong enough to overcome all other crises. Your visit to our country has been a great contribution of the consolidation of the faith, as it gave a very important strategic message to our society, which makes ever more successful our common efforts to strengthen common human values in Moldova and to enhance their role in the development of our society'.

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