Requiem concert to commemorate new martyrs and confessors of Christ in 15th-20th century Greece, Cyprus, Asia Minor and Pontus

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On January 25, 2012, a requiem concert took place at the Church of Christ the Saviour's Hall of Councils in conclusion of the 20th Educational Christmas Readings. Named 'Confessors of Orthodoxy after the Fall of the Empire', it was devoted to the feat performed by new martyrs and confessors of Christ in the 15th-20th century Greece, Cyprus, Asia Minor and Pontus.

The concert crowned the Russian-Greek memorial action 'From Nativity to Resurrection' aiming to introduce as many as possible people in Russia to the feat of Greek new martyrs and people in Greek to the feat of Russia's new martyrs. The action will continue in Rostov-on-Don, Alma Ata and Holy Mount Athos.

As part of the media project of the same name, the Moscow Patriarchate Publishers together with the Constantinople studio is working on an audio-book relating the lives of holy martyrs and confessors and stories about the Greek Crypto-Christians. The project was launched eight years ago with the blessing of the late Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia.

Present at the concert were Greek Foreign Minister Stavros Dimas, Greek Ambassador M. Spinnelis, Patriarch of Antioch's representative Metropolitan Athanasios of Kyrenia, Metropolitan Isaiah of Tamasos and Orini (Orthodox Church of Cyprus), Mr. S. Popov, president of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Orthodoxy, Mr. A. Samaras, leaders of the New Democracy Party in Greece, Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, a DECR vice-chairman, Fr. Simeon (Manakos) of the Dionysiou Monastery on Mount Athos, representatives of the Greek diasporas in Russia and Kazakhstan and the public in Greece and Cyprus as well as diplomats from the countries of Orthodox tradition.

The audience was welcomed by Archpriest Vladimir Solovyev, editor-in-chief of the Moscow Patriarchate Publishers, who underscored that 'we are united by Holy Orthodoxy, we are united by new martyrs'. He noted the interest the Greek people show in the feat of Russian new martyrs who suffered martyrdom in the 20th century and stressed that 'Russians should and want to know about the long-standing feat of Greek Orthodoxy, the feat of new martyrs through which the Church is asserted'.

Participating in the concert were the Greek Chorus 'Ergastiri Psaltikis' the Zykina Orchestra 'Russia',

the Kelli Ali team of Pontic folk music, and Russian performers. There were also speeches made by clergy, governmental officials and public figures.

The central spiritual symbol of the action was an icon painted on Holy Mount Athos. It was brought to Moscow on January 22, by a delegation of the Dionysiou Monastery led by Fr. Simeon. Depicted on the icon are the most revered new martyrs and confessors in Greece, Asia Minor and Pontus.

In the morning of that day, Fr. Simeon, who was Protos of Mount Athos in 2009, and the action leaders, film producers K. Charalampidis and P. Navrazidi from Alma Ata, and C. Simeonidis from Moscow, were introduced to Patriarch Kirill at the church of St. Tatiana in Moscow State University. They explained the aim of the project 'From Nativity to Resurrection', which is to tell to as many as possible people in Russia about the feat of Greek new martyrs and about the feat of Russian new martyrs to people in Greece.

Presenting His Holiness with the icon of new martyrs in Greece, Asia Minor and Pontus and special video materials on them, the leaders of the action asked his blessing on their efforts. Accepting the gift, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church said, 'With joy I give my blessing on all the actions aiming to propagate the veneration of Greek new martyrs in Russia and Russian new martyrs in Greece since there is no spiritual bonds stronger then the shared veneration of saints'.

In response to the words of love for Holy Mount Athos expressed by Fr. Simeon, His Holiness said, 'The Russian Church will do all that is possible for her to protect the Holy Mount against any attacks. Athos is a pillar of Orthodoxy. Without Athonite monasticism it is impossible to imagine the life of Orthodoxy and even of the whole world. Threats to Athos are coming from both outside and inside, the latter being more dangerous than the former'.

DECR Communication Service
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