



International festival in defense of family values ‘For Life – 2011’ held in Moscow

An international festival of social technologies for family values ‘For Life – 2011’ was held from July 7 to 9, 2011, in Moscow. It gathered together over 300 people from most of the regions in Russia and from other countries.

The best projects and methods of protecting motherhood were presented. The Synodal Department for Charity and Social Service conducted a contest for grants in the work for ‘Protection of Family, Motherhood and Childhood’, *Diakonia.ru* reported. The festival was planned to coincide with the First Congress of Social Service and Charity Departments Leaders. It was attended by over 250 representatives of 94 dioceses of the Moscow Patriarchate in Russia, Belarus, Estonia, France, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

The festival was opened on July 7 at the Salut Hotel. The opening ceremony was preceded by a thanksgiving at the venerated copy of the Tolga Icon of Our Lady. Among the most important events of the day was a conference of diocesan leaders responsible for social service. It was chaired by Bishop Panteleimon of Smolensk and Vyazma. The participants considered practical aspects of organizing diocesan centers for the protection of motherhood.

Among foreign guests was Father Savvas Michaelides of the Russian church of St. Stylianos in Limassol, Cyprus, who has devoted himself to the pastoral care of Russian-speaking believers in Cyprus. Father Savvas is the founder of a rehabilitation center for victims of sexual exploitation and a society for the defence of the unborn child.

On July 8, the commemoration day the Holy Prince Peter and Princess Fevronia the Miracle-workers of Murom, which is observed as the Day of Family, Love and Fidelity, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of the Protecting Veil in Sts Martha and Mary Convent of Charity, a historical center of the charity service, the Patriarchal Press

Service reported.

Among the worshippers were Russia's Healthcare and Social Development Minister Ms. T. Golikova, sisters of the convent, diocesan social departments' delegations and guests from abroad who came for the First Church Social Service Festival as well as participants in the International Festival of Social Technologies for Life and Family Values 'For Life - 2011'.

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