



## **Supreme Church Council of the Russian Orthodox Church holds its first meeting**

On 14 April 2011, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia chaired the first meeting of the Supreme Council of the Russian Orthodox Church. The meeting took place at the Red Hall of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour.

In his introductory speech His Holiness named the main reasons of establishing a new body of collective leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church and its tasks.

Bishop Merkury of Zaraisk, chairman of the Department for Religious Education and Catechization of the Russian Orthodox Church; archpriest Dimitry Smirnov, chairman of the Synodal Department for Cooperation with the Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies; and Mr. Vladimir Legoida, chairman of the Synodal Information Department, presented reports.

The reports and current tasks of the Supreme Church Council set by the church authorities were discussed. Taking part in the meeting of the Council were its members:

Metropolitan Varsonofiy of Saransk and Mordovia, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate;

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations;

Metropolitan Clement of Kaluga and Borovsk, chairman of the Publishing Council of the Russian Orthodox Church;

Archbishop Ioann of Belgorod and Sary Oskol, chairman of the Synodal Department for Mission;

Archbishop Yevgeniy of Vereya, chairman of the Education Committee at the Holy Synod;

Bishop Feognost, chairman of the Synodal Commission for Monasteries;

Archbishop Mark of Yegorievsk, head of the Administration for Moscow Patriarchate's Institutions Abroad;

Bishop Merkury of Zraisk, chairman of the Department of Religious Education and Catechization of the Russian Orthodox Church;

Bishop Irinarkh of Krasnogorsk, chairman of the Synodal Department for Ministry in Prisons;

Bishop Ignatiy of Bronnitsy, chairman of the Synodal Department for Youth Affairs;

Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administrative Secretariat;

Bishop Tikhon of Podolsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Finance and Economic Administration;

Bishop Kirill of Stavropol and Nevinnomyssk, chairman of the Synodal Department for Cooperation with the Cossacks;

Bishop Panteleimon of Smolensk and Vyazma, chairman of the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Ministry;

Archpriest Dimitry Smirnov, chairman of the Synodal Department for Cooperation with the Armed Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies;

Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov), executive secretary of the Patriarchal Council for Culture;

Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, chairman of the Synodal Department for Church-Society Relations;

Mr. Vladimir Legoida, chairman of the Synodal Information Department.

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His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia launched an initiative of establishing the Supreme Church Council at the Bishops' Council that took place in February 2011. The Bishops' Council supported the initiative and resolved to give formal status to the conferences of heads of the Synodal Departments as Supreme Church Council by analogy with the body that had been established by the

1917 All-Russia Church Council which had to end its work in the years of persecution.

The Holy Synod, at its session held on 22 March 2011, adopted Provisions of the Supreme Church Council of the Russian Orthodox Church and approved its membership.

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