



Primates of the Orthodox Churches of Russia and Cyprus celebrate at the Cathedral of the Assumption in Moscow Kremlin

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On 22 January, 2011, the commemoration day of St. Philipp, Metropolitan of Moscow, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos II of New Justiniana and All Cyprus celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Assumption in the Moscow Kremlin.

Concelebrating were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR); Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Zakynthos (Greek Orthodox Church); Metropolitan Athanasios of Kyrenaika, representative of the Patriarchate of Alexandria to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia; Archbishop Arseniy of Istra; Archbishop Mark of Yegorievsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Management for Institutions Abroad; Bishop Nectarios of Arsinoe (Orthodox Church of Cyprus); archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov), abbot of the Moscow Sretensky stavropegic monastery; archpriest Vladimir Divakov, the Patriarch's secretary for Moscow; archpriest Nikolai Balashov and hegumen Philip (Ryabykh), DECR deputy chairmen; archpriest Jan Zozuliak, dean of the Orthodox Theological Faculty of the University of Presov (Slovakia); archpriest Alexiy Yuschenko, representative of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia; hieromonk Antoniy (Sevryuk), head of the Patriarch's personal secretariat; and members of the Moscow Diocesan Council.

Praying at the service were Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administrative Secretariat, and Bishop Kirill of Pavlovsky Posad, chairman of the Synodal Committee for Relations with the Cossacks.

The liturgy was attended by Alexander Beglov, deputy head of the Presidential Administration and head of the Presidential Council for Cossack Affairs; writer Valentin Rasputin, prize winner-2010 of the International Foundation for the Unity of Orthodox Christian Nations (IFUOCN); Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cyprus to the Russian Federation, H.E. Petros Kestoras; head of the Presidential Heraldic Council, State Heroldmeister of the Russian Federation Georgiy Vilinbakhov; the IFUOCN President Valery Alexeyev; Cossack atamans and priests from eleven Cossack societies registered in the Russian Federation; and cadets from the Sholokhov Moscow Cossack Cadet Corpus.

After the divine service His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos, and the concelebrating hierarchs venerated the relics of St. Philipp.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill delivered a sermon in which he told the worshippers about St. Philipp's life and heroic deeds and greeted Archbishop Chrysostomos, saying:

"Your Beatitude, I am happy to have celebrated with you at the main church of Holy Russia on this day. By God's will you are the Primate of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus and spiritual leader of your nation at a difficult time. Your homeland is divided. We know that Orthodox churches have been destroyed in the northern part of the island, and Orthodox priest cannot celebrate even in these half-ruined churches. We know that you really care for your people and love the residents of Cyprus, be they Orthodox or Muslims, that you seek the unity of your country so that all people could live in peace and love.

"The upholding of this seemingly simple truth needs courage. May the example of St. Philipp help you in your difficult ministry to the Church and people of Cyprus.

"St. Sergius of Radonezh, a great zealot and spiritual authority of our people, founded the monastery and dedicated it to the Life-Giving Trinity at a time when the feudal Russia was divided from within and therefore seized by enemies. St. Sergius served to the unity of our country as no one else. It is not fortuitous that he called his first monastery the Monastery of the Holy Trinity, as the Holy Trinity is an image of unity and love.

"Your also seek to unite your nation. May the Holy Life-Giving Trinity, the image of Divine love and Divine unity help you in your labours. As a sign of my respect for your ministry and my love to you as to a brother, I would like to present you with an icon of the Holy Life-Giving Trinity. May the Lord bless your ministry of the Primate of the Church of Cyprus and spiritual leader of the Cypriots.

"Also, I would like you to have this holy panagia as a keepsake of our concelebration. As you wear it, recall today's divine service and our fraternal contacts and remember that you have true friends, brothers and sisters in Holy Russia who share your sorrows and are willing to pray for reconciliation on the blessed land of Cyprus."

His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos thanked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill for brotherly concelebration and noted the importance of fraternal relations between the people of Russia and Cyprus. He presented Patriarch Kirill with an icon of St. Barnabas, the founder of the Church of Cyprus, and a silver tray with a picture of Cyprus.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church congratulated the IFUOCN prize-winners, greeted members of the Moscow Diocesan Council, and blessed banners, ensigns and standards of the Cossack societies registered in the Russian Federation.

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