Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church takes decisions on external church activities

On 24 December 2010, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia chaired the session of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church held at the Patriarch's working residence, Chisty side street.

His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine; Metropolitan Vladimir of St. Petersburg and Ladoga; Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus; Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna; Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and Moldova; Metropolitan Varsonofiy of Saransk and Mordovia, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations are permanent members of the Holy Synod. Inviting to take part in the winter session were Metropolitan Lazar of Simferopol and the Crimea; Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia; Archbishop Prokl of Simbirsk and Melekess; Bishop Aleksandr of Baku and Caspian Region; and Bishop Daniil of Yuzhno-Sakhaklinsk and the Kuril Islands.

The Holy Synod took certain decision on the life of the Church, relations between the Church and society, and external activities of the Russian Orthodox Church.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia presented a report on his visit to Kiev timed to the 75th birthday of His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine. Among those taking part in the celebration were Metropolitan Christopher of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, and representatives of other Local Orthodox Churches. His Holiness met with the Ukrainian President Viktor F. Yanukovich. Members of the Holy Synod thanked the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church for his visit to Kiev, and Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine for his noble ministry he performs with dignity and honour. They offered up prayers to the Lord for helping Metropolitan Vladimir in his archpastoral labours for many years.

The Synod underscored the importance of the address delivered by the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church at the Fourth Assembly of the Russian World for preserving spiritual and cultural unity of fraternal nations whose common history has begun when the Old Russian state was established with its capital in Kiev. Members of the Synod expressed their wish to develop cooperation with the governmental and public organizations of the Russian World in spiritual support of the believers belonging to the Russian Orthodox Church and living beyond the borders of the Moscow Patriarchate's canonical territory.

The work of the Intercouncil Presence of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2010 was approved. The participants in the session endorsed the proposal of the Intercouncil Presence's Presidium to include in the Presidium *ex officio* Bishop Irinarkh of Krasnogorsk, chairman of the Synodal Department for Prison Ministry; Bishop Ignatiy of Bronnitsy, chairman of the Synodal Department for Youth Affairs; and Bishop Kirill of Pavlovsky Posad, chairman of the Synodal Committee for Relations with the Cossacks.

The Holy Synod approved the work of the Sixth International Scholarly Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church on "Life in Christ: Christian Morality, Church Ascetic Traditions, and Challenges of Modern Age" held on 15-18 November 2010 and noted the usefulness of inviting Orthodox theologians from other Local Churches to theological forums as well as the necessity to develop inter-Orthodox relations in the field of church science and theology.

The Synod resolved to release Metropolitan Chrysostom of Vilnius and Lithuania from his duties of head of the diocese of Lithuania and to retire him in compliance with his request and to thank him for his long archpastoral work in many dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Holy Synod appointed Archbishop Innokentiy of Korsun to rule the diocese of Vilnius and Lithuania and thanked him for his archpastoral care for the parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in the countries of Western Europe.

Bishop Nestor of Caffa, a vicar of the Korsun diocese, was appointed Bishop of Korsun and charged with archpastoral care for the parishes in Italy.

The Holy Synod considered a vacancy in the Arkhangelsk diocese opened due to the demise of Bishop Tikhon of Arkhangelsk and Kholmogory and resolved to appoint Bishop Daniil of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk and the Kuril Island Bishop of Arkhangelsk and Kholmogory.

Archimandrite Tikhon (Dorovskikh), a cleric of the Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk diocese, was nominated Bishop of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk and the Kuril Islands.

As to the newly established Karaganda diocese, the Holy Synod resolved to nominate archpriest Aleksandr Osokin, a cleric of the Astana diocese, Bishop of Karaganda and Shakhtinsk.

In following up the petitions from the clergymen of the Ungeni-Nisporeni diocese and the report presented by Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and Moldova, the Holy Synod resolved to appoint Bishop Petr of Hîncesti, a vicar of the Kishinev metropolia, Bishop of Ungeni and Nisporeni; to take the parishes of the Hîncesti district of the Republic of Moldova from the Cahul-Comrat diocese and to include them into the Ungeni-Nisporeni diocese.

The Holy Synod considered the nomination of a bishop to the Edineţ-Briceni diocese of the Orthodox Church in Moldova and resolved to nominate archimandrite Nikodim (Vulpe), dean of the Orkhei deanery of the Kishinev metropolia Bishop of Edineţ-Briceni.

Members of the Holy Synod resolved appoint a delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church to the meeting of the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission to take place in Chambesy, Switzerland, on 21-27 February 2011. The delegation will include Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR) – head of the delegation; Archbishop Mark of Berlin-Germany and Great Britain – member of the delegation; and archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR deputy chairman – consultant of the delegation.

Having heard the report of Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk on the work of the Commission on Old Believer Parishes and Relations with the Old Rite done from 2 October 2009 to 19 November 2010, members of the Holy Synod approved of the report.

The DECR chairman presented a report on the visit of the Moscow Patriarchate's delegation to Georgia to celebrate the 1700th anniversary of the building of the first church on the burial place of the Tunic of the Lord and the 1000th anniversary of the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. The Divine Liturgy was celebrated by His Holiness and Beatitude Iliya II, Catholicos and Patriarch of All Georgia; His Beatitude Chrysostomos, Archbishop of New Justiniana and All Cyprus; and His Beatitude Metropolitan Christopher of the Czech Lands and Slovakia. Concelebrating were representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches, and bishops and clerics of the Georgian Orthodox Church. The Primate of the Georgian Orthodox Church met several times with Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's delegation.

The Holy Synod expressed satisfaction with the participation of the Moscow Patriarchate's representatives in the celebration and thanked His Holiness and Beatitude Iliya I, Catholicos and Patriarch of All Georgia for attention and hospitality extended to the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Having heard the report on the participation of the delegation headed by the DECR chairman Metropolitan Hilarion in the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the canonization of Nicholas of Japan, the granting of the autonomous status to the Orthodox Church of Japan by the Russian Orthodox Church, and the establishment of the Metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church in Tokyo, the Holy Synod thanked His Eminence Daniel, Archbishop of Tokyo and Metropolitan of All Japan, for attention and hospitality accorded to the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk reported on the visit to the Holy Mount Athos during which the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church took part in the celebration of the 95th birthday of archimandrite Jeremiah (Alyokhin), hegumen of the Russian St. Panteleimon's Monastery, visited some Athonite monastery and met with the Protos of the Holy Mountain, monk Peter.

The Holy Synod expressed appreciation with the participation of the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 7th meeting of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission for Orthodoxy-Islam Dialogue and considered it useful to continue the dialogue between the Department for External Church Relations with the Muslim community in Iran.

Having heard the report by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk on the participation of the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church in the workshop on "Promoting Human Rights through a Better Understanding of Traditional Values of Humankind" held in Geneva on 4 October 2010, the Holy Synod members noted the expedience of the DECR's promotion of the position of the Church expressed in the "Basic Teaching of the Russian Orthodox Church on Human Dignity, Freedom and Rights" at the international organizations, for instance, the United Nations Human Rights Council.

It was resolved to appoint secretary of the Liaison Office of the Moscow Patriarchate at the World Council of Churches, archpriest Mikhail Gundyaev, representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church at the World Council of Churches and other international organizations in Geneva and charge him with maintaining contacts with the United national Human Rights Council.

The Holy Synod considered the results of the seminar on "The Role of Religious Communities in the Management of World Heritage Properties" held in Kiev on 2-5 November and resolved to continue the work of the Church aimed at establishing the international legal grounds for extension of the religious communities' participation in managing these properties.

Having heard the report of Metropolitan Hilarion on the working plan of the Department for External Church Relations for 2011, the participants in the session approved of the plan of external activities of the Russian Orthodox Church for the next year.

Decision on the dioceses and parishes abroad were taken. For instance, the newly established parishes of the Presentation in the Temple of the Most Holy Mother of God in Drogheda, Ireland, and of the Epiphany in Atlon, Ireland, were included in the Sourozh diocese.

Archpriest Oktavian Koka was released from his duties of a cleric of the Patriarchal parishes in Italy as his term has expired and sent to serve under Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and Moldova. Upon an agreement with His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine, archpriest Vladimir Melnichuk of the Lutsk diocese of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was sent to serve under Bishop Nestor of Korsun to care for the Ukrainian Orthodox diaspora in the city of Cagliari in Sardinia, Italy.

Rev. Georgy Sergeyev was released from his duties of a cleric of the Patriarchal parishes in Canada as his term has expired and sent to serve under the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. Upon an agreement with His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine, Rev. Antoniy Filchak, a cleric of the Kiev diocese of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, was sent to serve under Bishop Iov of Kashira, administrator of the Patriarchal parishes in Canada.

The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church resolved to elevate deacon Leonid Kazakov of the St. Petersburg diocese to the rank of priest and appoint him rector of St. Nicholas' church in San Francisco, USA.

Hegumen Pimen (Kharaim) was released of his duties of a cleric of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem as his term has expired an sent to serve under the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. It was resolved to send Archpriest Igor Pchelintsev, a cleric of the Nizhniy Novgorod diocese, to the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem to serve at the Metochion of St. Tabitha in Jaffa.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/56226/