



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill arrives in Kiev to celebrate 75th birthday of His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir

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On 22 November 2010, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia arrived in Kiev to take part in the celebration of the 75th birthday of His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine.

His Holiness is accompanied by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR); Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administrative Secretariat; V. Legoida, chairman of the Synodal Information Department; archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR deputy chairman; Rev. Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for Inter-Orthodox relations; hieromonk Antoniy (Sevryuk), head of His Holiness' personal secretariat; and M. Kuksov, a staff member of the same secretariat.

His Holiness was met at the "Borispol" airport by His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church; Ukrainian deputy prime minister V. Tikhonov; head of the State Department for Religious Affairs Yu. Bogutsky; and the newly appointed chairman of the Kiev state administration A. Popov. On coming out from the airplane, His Holiness blessed the welcoming party with the miraculous icon of the Mother of God called "Lovingkindness" from Diveyevo brought to Ukraine for Metropolitan Vladimir's jubilee.

In his short interview to the journalists, His Holiness told them about the purpose of his visit to Ukraine:

"I have arrived in the first capital city of Kiev to celebrate a remarkable event – the 75th birthday of Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev. My short visit is dedicated to this event and will last only twenty-four hours.

"I shall be happy to concelebrate in the Laura of the Caves, to talk with my brothers archpastors, clergymen and laymen. I invoke God's blessing on Ukraine and its pious people. May the Lord keep us all in peace and love, capable of helping and supporting one another."

His Holiness also told the journalists about the icon brought to Ukraine:

"The miraculous icon of the Mother of God called "Lovingkindness" had been kept in the cell of St. Seraphim of Sarov. It was before this icon that he always prayed and died. When the Diveyevo convent was devastated, the icon was hidden by the nuns who lived in Murom as private persons. Later, it was kept by a pious priest till the time when it became possible to say that the icon was saved. Now, this holy icon has been brought here in connection with His Beatitude's jubilee; the Ukrainians can venerate it."

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church proceeded from the airport to the Laura of the Caves, press service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia reports.

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