



Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church meets with students of Higher Diplomatic Courses

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On 18 November 2010, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with students of the Higher Diplomatic Courses of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. The meeting took place at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour.

Taking part in the meeting were RF deputy minister of foreign affairs V. Yakovenko, rector A. Panov and other leaders of the Diplomatic Academy, as well as with heads of diplomatic and consular agencies – students of the Higher Diplomatic Courses.

The Russian Orthodox Church was represented by deputy chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR) hegumen Philipp (Ryabykh), DECR secretary for far abroad countries Rev. Sergiy Zvonarev, and a DECR staff member M. Palasio.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill greeted the participants and noted that these meeting have become a good tradition and another form of cooperation of the Church with Russian diplomats.

While taking of external activities of the Russian Orthodox Church, His Holiness called the gathering of Russian-speaking diaspora in the far abroad an important step in the development of the Russian world.

"The reunification of the Russian Church in May 2007 has become the most important stage in overcoming our differences. This event has created prerequisites for further reunification of people belonging to Russia culture," His Holiness said.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church named certain events held for cooperation with the compatriots and their unification at the parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church, for instance, World Congress of Compatriots (Moscow, December 2007); Round Table "Compatriots and the Russian Orthodox Church: Experience of Cooperation on Latin America" (August 2010); Thirst and Fourth Assemblies of the Russian World (Moscow, November 2009 and 2010).

His Holiness noted in particular that inter-Orthodox relations allow to act even there where opportunities of international diplomacy are limited. "Participation of representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church

in the life of the Georgian Orthodox Church, visits of Georgian clergymen to Russia and of Russian clergymen to Georgia allow us to maintain both ecclesiastical and humanitarian relations, making the prospect of normalizing relations between the two countries real. The last event in this regard was the DECR chairman's visit to Georgia in October 2010 to celebrate the thousandth anniversary of the Cathedral in Mtskheta."

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill is convinced that contacts of the Russian Church with the ancient Local Orthodox Churches with canonical territories in the Middle East countries are the most important factor on international arena. "My visits to the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Alexandria, and the forthcoming visits to the Patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem have a double purpose, namely, to support the minority Orthodox population and church structures on the one hand, and to on the other hand to find a correct approach to different religious and political forces in the region."

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church also noted that new prospects were being open to cooperation between the Russian Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches. "Our relations are developing in several directions. First, since 1980, a theological dialogue has been carried on the problems that divide us, such as the Unia and the primacy of authority of the Bishop of Rome. Secondly, we develop bilateral relations that directly concern the life of our believers."

"It is impossible to neglect international structures in the global world. Therefore, the Russian world's presence on international platforms should be active. The Russian Orthodox Church continues its dialogue with international organizations, including those in the system of UN, OSCE, the Council of Europe, and the European Union," His Holiness underscored.

"Modern times make the Russian world to mobilize its entire potential for not being absorbed by different powerful political and economic centres," His Holiness noted and said further, "In the modern world, no country can declare itself a serious global player without clear position concerning values and a vision of humanity's ideology. The great power is characterized by an ability to uphold traditions of its people, their religious and cultural values, and the moral foundations of society. Western countries recognize the status of a country and its role in global processes by this ability."

In conclusion of his address, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill wished all those present new achievements and God's help in their responsible diplomatic ministry.

Deputy foreign minister V. Yakovenko thanked the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church on behalf of the diplomatic corps. A. Panov expressed gratitude to His Holiness on behalf of the Diplomatic Academy and Higher Diplomatic Courses.

In the end of the meeting, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church answered questions.

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