Patriarch Kirill opens 4th Congress of Diocesan Missionaries

The 4th Congress of Diocesan Missionaries of the Russian Orthodox Church was opened by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia on 16 November 2010 at the Church of Christ the Saviour's Councils Hall. Before the opening His Holiness celebrated a thanksgiving, the Patriarchal Press Service has reported.

The Congress is attended by 165 delegates from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and other countries comprising the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate. The delegates represent 101 dioceses and 16 educational institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Archbishop Ioann of Belgorod and Stary Oskol opened the work of the forum with a report about its membership and work plan. Archbishop Philip of Poltava and Mirgorod, chairman of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's missionary department, was elected secretary of the Congress. Bishop Gennady of Kaskelen was elected chairman of the drafting committee. The forum also elected members of the drafting committee and adopted the procedure and agenda.

Archbishop Philip read out a message of greetings from His Beatitude Jonah, Primate of the Orthodox Church in America. The forum was addressed by Mr. Poltavchenko, presidential envoy for the Central Federal Okrug, who conveyed greetings from President Dmitry Medvedev.

Patriarch Kirill as honorary chairman of the Congress, made a keynote speech about the aims and tasks of the missionary service of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Archbishop Ioann made a report on the Missionary Responsibility of the Laity. Patriarch Kirill awarded the archbishop the Order of St. Seraphim in recognition of his archpastoral ministry and on the occasion of his 50th birthday.

His Eminence Ioann handed diplomas of the Synodal Department for Mission to benefactors and lay people who had participated in the preparation of the 4th Missionary Congress.

Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman presented a paper on Overcoming Schisms and the Tasks of Mission.

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