



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Department for External Church Relations

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill: Christianity is not a theory, either an ideology, or a ritual. It is life first and foremost

On 15 November 2010, the 6th International Theological Conference of the Russian Orthodox Church on "Life in Christ: Christian Ethics, Ascetic Tradition of the Church, and Challenges of Modern Epoch" opened at the conference hall of "Danilovskaya" hotel.

The task of the conference is to show and denote the means of Christian witness to the modern dechristianized society. This witness should include not only preaching by word of the Good News of salvation brought about by God-Man Jesus Christ, but also preaching by deed, which means to show the world the experience of life in Christ, of gracious transformation, spiritual asceticism, and faithfulness to the Gospel moral commandments.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia greeted the participants and told them about the meaning of theology in the life of the Orthodox Church at present. His Holiness underscored that Christian teaching should become a part of everyday life. "A great problem of the church life today is in the inability of theology and thus of preaching to make Christian message actual. Theologians should help people to understand divine texts in reference to the present day and the prospects they open, this being "a real witness about Christ the Saviour of the world on intellectual level."

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church believes that the Church should be present "in everyday life of people, help them to perceive the eternal Divine commandments from within, on the basis of their own concerns, and to determine true priorities of life." His Holiness emphasized that Christianity "is not a

theory, either a mythology, or a ritual, but life itself." The Church and all her members are called to witness the fullness of this life."

"It is important to make the ascetic message of the Church actual for modern man, to help people understand that there is no human life outside this norm of life, that survival of human civilization is conditioned by this order of life that God has given to people in His Word," His Holiness said.

Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Slutsk, Chairman of the Synodal Biblical and Theological Commission, presented the schedule and rules of the conference.

Taking part in the conference sponsored by the Synodal Biblical and Theological Commission are representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches, and Russian and foreign theologians. The St. Gregory the Theologian Charity Foundation supports the conference.

Publication of the documents of the last conference held in 2007 on the church teaching on sacraments was timed to the present forum.

On the first day of the conference, the participants heard report by representatives of the Orthodox sister Churches.

On November 18, the last day of the Conference, a round table on topical problems of common Orthodox witness to the world will be chaired by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations. The conference will complete its work by issuing final document.

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