



Patriarch Kirill's message to the First International Symposium on Ethical Aspects of Banking

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church has sent the following message of greetings to the First International Symposium on Ethical Aspects of Banking and Social Role of Banks. Russian and Italian Experience (October 2010, Moscow)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I cordially greet you all as you have gathered together to discuss the ethical dimension of banking and the social role of banks. This theme has become especially relevant in a situation where politicians and representatives of the business community continue searching for ways of overcoming the global financial and economic crisis and a possibility to build a new model for the development of global economy.

As the state of economy is dependent to a great extent on the spiritual and moral condition of the personality, the financial activity should have ethical guidelines. Material wealth in itself does not make a person happy. Moreover, one's concentration only on material success leads to a moral degradation of the personality. Christ warns us: 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions' (Lk. 12:15). The Church calls to see in wealth a gift of God given to a person not only for his sake but also for the sake of his neighbours.

The economic activity which ignores moral imperatives and is aimed wholly at personal enrichment has no future. Those who receive a profit should realize that they bear the great responsibility to be sensitive to the needs of other people and to do all that is possible to remove economic injustice in society, thus fulfilling the will of God.

The banking community can make a contribution to the building of a human community with justice primarily through active participation in social work. I believe the representatives of Russian and Italian banks participating in this forum can share their considerable experience in realization of social projects.

I hope that the discussion on the future economic world order will help you to become aware of the

significance that basic Christian values have for rational economy and harmonious world order. Without this awareness it would hardly be possible to find a way out of a systemic crisis.

I invoke God's blessing upon your efforts and wish you success in your work at the forum.

+ KIRILL

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

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