



## **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with representatives of the Russian museum community**

On 29 August 2010, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the cathedral square of St. Andronik's Monastery, which houses the Andrei Rublev Central Museum of Old Russian Culture and Art and marks its 650<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

After the divine service His Holiness Patriarch Kirill had a talk with representatives of the Russian museum community, press service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia reports.

Taking part in the meeting were RF Minister of Culture A. Avdeyev, deputy director of the Department of Cultural Heritage and Fine Arts of the Russian Ministry of Culture V. Tsvetnov, director of the Andrei Rublev Central Museum of Old Russian Culture and Art G. Popov, general director of the "Moscow Kremlin" State Museum Ye. Gagarina, general director of the State Tretyakov Gallery I. Lebedeva, director of the State Russian Museum V. Gusev, director of the State Museum of History A. Levykin, and general director of the State Museum of Oriental Art A. Sedov.

The Russian Orthodox Church was represented by the chairman of the Education Committee Archbishop Yevgeny of Vereya; the chairman of the Synodal Commission for Monasteries Archbishop Feognost of Sergiev Posad; Bishop Michael of Geneva and Western Europe; the chairman of the Department for Religious Education and Catechization Bishop Merkury of Zaraisk; the chairman of the Finance and Economic Directorate of the Moscow Patriarchate Bishop Tikhon of Podolsk; the chairman of the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Ministry Bishop Panteleimon of Orekhovo-Zuevo; secretary of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia for Moscow archpriest Vladimir Divakov; abbot of the Sretensky Stavropegic Monastery and secretary of the Patriarchal Council for Culture archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov); rector of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Humanitarian University archpriest Vladimir Vorobiev; and the chairman of the Synodal Information Department V. Legoida.

Minister Avdeyev told the audience about the plans of the Ministry of Culture to cooperate with the Russian Orthodox Church in preserving and reconstructing the monuments of religious heritage.

Director of the Andrei Rublev Museum G. Popov and director of the State Tretyakov Gallery I. Lebedeva thanked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill for the attention of the Church to the preservation of cultural values and expressed their hope for a new impetus to be given to cooperation by setting up the Commission for cooperation between the Russian Orthodox Church and museum community at the Patriarchal Council for Culture.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church noted the necessity of working out certain mechanisms of cooperation between religious organizations and museum community as we do not have clearly defined mechanisms at present, but only an experience of cooperation, sometimes very positive, but sometimes rather dramatic one.

The establishment of the mentioned Commission has become an important step on the way to cooperation. His Holiness named certain tasks of the new church agency, including elaboration of the system of centralized control over the meeting of prescribed requirements to the preservation, restoration, and use of the objects of cultural heritage currently in possession of or use by religious organizations of the Russian Orthodox Church.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said that these problems should be resolved together and noted that there was no question of revising the rights of property and added: "In no circumstances we shall ruin museum collections or bring any other harm to our museums, but we should take care for making holy objects open to our believers and for adequate preservation of these objects both in churches and in museums. I do hope that respected representatives of museum community will respond to my invitation to cooperate with the church commission."

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