



Polish version of Patriarch Kirill's book presented in Warsaw

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The Polish version of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia's book *Freedom and Responsibility: In a Search for Harmony. Human Rights and Dignity* was presented on 23 June 2010 at the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw.

The Academy's rector, Archbishop Jeremiah of Wrocław and Szczecin, made an opening speech addressed to the audience consisting of diplomats, representatives of the Orthodox and Catholic public, as well as professors and students.

In his speech during the presentation, Metropolitan Hilarion thanked those who worked to translate the book into Polish. 'I can see that the Polish intelligentsia is interested in this book and its Russian theological, historiosophic and political thinking, which makes up an essential part of the Russian culture as a whole. The ideas underlying the works by Patriarch Kirill may be a subject for intellectual communication between Russian and Polish theologians, philosophers, public and political leaders as well as ordinary believers', he said.

Metropolitan Hilarion also pointed to the topicality of the problems of human rights and freedoms in social life and international discussion and to moral responsibility as a necessary condition for human survival.

He made a special mention of Christianophobia as a consequence of liberal norms. He cited the European Court of Human Rights' decision in the case of Lautsi versus Italy made on 3 November 2009 as an example of infringement upon the rights of Christians, since this decision affirms that the presence of crucifixes in Italian public schools violates human rights. 'We are dealing with an attempt to establish a new godless ideology which deprives Christians of an opportunity to bring the religious dimension into public life. The Russian Orthodox Church has supported Italy, Russia and some other states which have come out against this decision, which vividly demonstrates how the modern interpretation of human rights becomes a pretext for restricting the freedom of believers', he said.

In conclusion of his speech, Metropolitan Hilarion said, 'Christianity teaches righteous life in conformity with God-given dignity. Only such life can be truly harmonious and free. Returning to their spiritual roots and following the lofty ideals of morality in their deeds and action, European Christians are capable of

building a thriving society on the basis of the good and justice, charity and mutual aid. I hope that the book by Patriarch Kirill will become a contribution to the debate held in Poland on acute problems involved in human rights’.

The speakers were asked numerous questions from the audience, with most of them concerning the drafting of a document on reconciliation of peoples in Eastern Europe.

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