



Patriarch Kirill's message to guests and participants in the concert of Russian Orthodox music in Vatican

To: His Holiness BENEDICT XVI

Pope of Rome

To: Guests and participants in the concert of Russian Orthodox music

20 May 2010, Vatican

Your Holiness, Dear Brother Beloved in Christ,

Your Eminences and Graces,

Dear Brothers and Sisters.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I cordially greet Your Holiness and all the participants in the concert of Russian Orthodox music organized by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Pontifical Council for Culture and the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations.

For the first time in history, three remarkable teams – the Russian National Orchestra, Moscow Synodal Choir and St. Petersburg's Horn Capella – have united in the Paul VI Hall to perform works of Russian composers. Present in the hall are the Primate of the Roman Catholic Church, bishops and priests, monastics and lay people. All this makes this concert a significant event in the history of cultural exchange between our two Churches.

Music is a special language which gives us an opportunity to communicate through hearts. Music is capable of conveying the emotional experience of the human soul and spiritual states which are impossible to describe by words.

To understand a particular people one should listen to their music. This is true not only for the Orthodox liturgical music, the best pieces of which are to be presented today, but also for the works of Russian composers written to be performed in a concert hall. In the years of persecution against the Church and the domination of official atheism when spiritual music was inaccessible for the general public, these works, along with masterpieces of Russian literature and visual arts, served the cause of Christian preaching by carrying to the world lofty spiritual and moral ideals.

Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute (Ps. 3-4). These words of the psalm, which will resound today, show that music can be imbued with the spirit of prayer and intercession before God. Even secular in form, music can be spiritual in essence.

I wish God's help to Your Holiness, to all the guests and participants in the concert.

+ Kirill

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

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