



Patriarch Kirill celebrates the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday of Orthodoxy

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On 21 February 2010, the Sunday of Orthodoxy, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrated the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great and the Service of the Triumph of Orthodoxy at the cathedral Church of Christ the Saviour.

He was assisted by a great assembly of bishops and priests both from inside and outside Russia. The service was attended by the ambassadors of Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.

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In the sanctuary he had a talk with Metropolitan Timothy of Vostra, Patriarchate of Jerusalem. In memory of the service His Holiness presented him with a set of pectoral icons.

After the reading of the Gospel, His Holiness addressed the congregation, speaking about the spiritual significance of the feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy. 'We believe that the great mission of the Church to save the entire human race and to preserve the moral foundations of the human community will continue to the end of time. The Church on earth is called the militant Church, that is, the Church which is in struggle. Our struggle is not a struggle with human views and beliefs or with flesh and blood but a struggle against the forces of darkness and for the true faith as it alone can help to preserve the moral nature of the human race, whether people are aware or unaware it and whether they accept or reject it. But as a fermenting agent, as leaven, the faith of Christ is capable of transforming the whole world, the whole creation', he said.

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Among the speakers during the common meal after the service were Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Archbishop Feognost of Sergiev Posad, as well as ambassadors of Bulgaria, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova and Serbia, and Archpriest Rauno Pietarinen of the Finnish Orthodox Church.

In his concluding remarks Patriarch Kirill noted that the Triumph of Orthodoxy is a feast day when we especially strongly feel the integrity of Holy Orthodoxy. 'The Orthodox Church is one body', His Holiness stressed, reminding the assembly that the administrative borders of Local Orthodox Churches are conditional since the same Sacraments are celebrated within them and their faithful are edified by the same word of God. The presence of representatives of various Local Churches and ambassadors of Orthodox countries in the patriarchal cathedral today is a vivid manifestation of the Orthodox unity.

Addressing the diplomats, the Primate of the Russian Church called them to build a system of solidarity among the nations in which Orthodox Christians make up a majority of the population. The feeling of profound spiritual community impels the people of these countries to share their joys and sorrows, he stressed.

Addressing the Ukrainian ambassador, Patriarch Kirill informed him of his forthcoming visit to Kiev at the invitation of the President-elect Victor Yanukovich for the presidential inauguration. He shared his conviction that the main task facing the Ukrainian people today is to overcome divisions and consolidate national unity. 'The time is coming for Ukraine today to unite and engage in constructive work', His Holiness said.

Responding to the greetings by the Moldavian ambassador, Patriarch Kirill expressed the wish that the people of his country may successfully overcome the political trials and fortify the Moldavian statehood on the solid basis of traditional values cherished by the Orthodox people of Moldova.

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