



## Memorial service held in Moscow for victims of mass starvation in the USSR

Victims of the mass starvation and repression were commemorated on 28 November 2009 at the Cathedral of the Epiphany at Yelokhovo in Moscow. The Office for the Dead was led by the rector of the church, Protopresbyter Matfey Stadniuk.

Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, chairman of the Synodal department for church-state relations, delivered a homily.

Among the worshippers was Ukrainian ambassador in Moscow, Mr. K. Grishchenko.

Since 2006, the service for the repose of those who died in the mass famine, which spread to Ukraine, Transvolga region, the North Caucasus, the southern Urals and western Siberia and claimed millions of lives in 1932-1933, has been said with the blessing of the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church in many cities in Russia and the Moscow Patriarchate parishes in other countries.

On July 27, 2009, during his stay in Kiev, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill together with His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine and Ukrainian President V. Yushchenko visited the memorial for the victims of the mass famine in the 30s at the Eternal Memory Park and laid flowers and wheat spikelets at the memorial.

Addressing those who came to the memorial that day, His Holiness said, 'A terrible famine brought about by concrete political reasons and exacerbated by natural cataclysms led to the death of an enormous number of people in Ukraine, Transvolga region, North Caucasus, southern Urals, western Siberia and Kazakhstan. It was a common disaster for all our people who lived in a united country at that time. It is no wonder therefore that we pray for the innocent victims and commemorate those who died. Remembering them, we also pray that nothing like that could happen again and that no such event in our history could be made an obstacle for fraternal fellowship and that never in our history could a fratricidal historiography be developed from such tragic developments. We should pray and work together to make the world better, to make the life of our peoples better, to prevent innocent victims' departing to God at a time of peace'.