



## Round Table Held on the Ethical Problems of Vaccination in the Light of Orthodox Teaching



A round table was held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at Sretensky Theological Academy in Moscow within the framework of the Inter-conciliar Presence of the Russian Orthodox Church on the topic of vaccination and ethical problems in the light of Orthodox teaching.

The event was headed by the chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchy and secretary of the Inter-conciliar Presence the metropolitan of Voskresensk Dionisy.

The round table was attended by bishops and clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church, scholars, doctors, public figures and Orthodox faithful keen to express their stance publicly. The topic of discussion was the vaccination programme and how the faithful are to relate to it. The problems of the relationship between Christian bio-ethics and the technologies used for making particular vaccines were examined separately.

The round table was opened by the metropolitan of Voskresensk Dionisy who in his greetings reminded participants that discussion on the vaccination programme had been ongoing for a while since 2008 when, with the blessing of the ever-memorable Patriarch Alexy II, the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Ministry held a round table on the topic of vaccine prophylactics for children, the problems that arose in connection with this and the means of resolving such problems. Further to this, the issues of vaccinations were discussed at the All-Russian Congress of Orthodox Physicians which issued a joint statement of the Council and Society of Orthodox Physicians of Russia on the problems of vaccination in Russia. Then, in 2019 the Patriarchal commission on the family, the defence of motherhood and children issued a statement on parental rights in the sphere of protecting children's health and immuno-prophylactics.

Among the round table's participants were the metropolitan of Zaporozhie and Melitopol Luke, the chairman of the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Ministry the bishop of Vereya Panteleimon, the bishop of Kalachinsk and Muromtsevo Peter, the deputy chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchy the bishop of Zvenigorod Savva, the chairman of the Synodal commission on bio-ethics the bishop of Peterhof Siluan, the deputy chairman of the Department of External Church Relations archpriest Nikolai Balashov, the chairman of the Committee for Education of the Russian Orthodox Church and acting rector of Sretensky Theological Academy archpriest Maxim Kozlov, the chairman of the Synodal Department for Public Relations between the Church, Society and the Media Vladimir Legoida, the head doctor of the St. Alexis of Moscow Hospital Alexei Zarov, the director of laboratory for genomics and epigenomics of the spine at the biotechnology federal research centre under the Russian Academy of Sciences and dean of the faculty of biomedicine at the Russian National Research Medical University Yegor Prokhorchuk, the head of the department for hospital therapy at the pediatric faculty of the Russian National Research Medical University, vice-president of the national medical chamber, academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences and doctor of medicine Alexander Chuchalin, the deputy chairman of the Synodal Department for Public Relations between the Church, Society and Media Vakhtang Kipshidze and many others.

The round table studied the historical experience of the Church's reaction to vaccination programmes as the basic means of dealing with epidemics and examined the problems of the safety and the voluntary nature of vaccination.

A final document was adopted at the end of the round table, states the official site of the Moscow Patriarchate with a link to the Synodal Department for Public Relations between the Church, Society and the Media.