The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church celebrates the Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Nativity of Christ in the Christ the Saviour Cathedral



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On the night of 6th to the 7th January on the feast of the Nativity of Our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill celebrated at the Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow a number of Nativity services one after another, being Great Compline, Matins and the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.

The Nativity Patriarchal service was broadcast live on the Perviy, Rossia 1 and Spas TV stations, as well as on the Russian Orthodox Church's website patriarchia.ru. Commentating on the broadcast was the deputy director of the press service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Nikolai Derzhavin. The broadcast was accompanied by a sign language translation on the Spas TV station and the patriarchia.ru website.

In accordance with tradition, before the beginning of the service the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church congratulated people live on television on the occasion of the feast of Christ's Nativity:

"On the eve of the feast of Christ's Nativity, I would like to address each and everyone one of you, my beloved. We have now arrived at the celebration of one the greatest Christian solemnities. We glorify the manifestation of God's grace towards humankind, for through the coming into the world of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man, the great truth of own lives has been revealed to us. The truth which contains a genuine system of values which, if followed, allow people to acquire the plenitude of being.

This truth and this life comprise the fundamental dimensions of human existence. We are celebrating not only a historical event, as some believe; rather, we are celebrating an event which has radically transformed the entire course of human history, and these two-thousand years gone bear witness to this in full measure. Thus we, people of the twenty-first century, in touching upon this history, in touching upon the Fount of this history our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in celebrating his coming into the world, through this contact with our hearts and minds we undoubtedly acquire both wisdom and strength, and we are fortified in our own lives. It is the Lord our Saviour who grants to us both strength and life. And if we lose our faith, we lose the opportunity to root ourselves in God's aid and in God's power as we tread our path through life.

Today people are faced with many difficulties, trials and temptations, and all of this disorientates us and very often removes our focus away from that which is most important, that is, from God and our lives, towards other goals and values. So, Christ's Nativity, our thoughts on the coming into the world of the Saviour and our prayers on this day may help us to return to the path filled with truth leading towards life and to once more acquire the fullness of being.

It is my desire that each of us experiences in a very special way this Christmas night, feel God's presence, pray with all our soul for our families and those close to us, for our homeland, for those who suffer, for our brothers in Ukraine who are being expelled from the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev, the very same monastery which for centuries has been the preserve of genuine, unadulterated Orthodoxy. Let us pray for our brothers and sisters and for the confessors of Christ's faith in the twenty-first century. Today, let us be with them and with their afflictions in our prayers and in our manifestation of solidarity and love with and towards them. And we believe that all of these temptations of the devil will recede and that one day, with the passage of time, many people will with irony, and perhaps with a smile, recall the pitiful attempts to destroy the canonical Orthodox Church in Ukraine. Let us pray for our brothers and sisters in the land of Ukraine. Let us pray for our country, for the country of Russia, for her authorities and army. Let us pray for our kin and friends on this holy and radiant night in the hope that through the

power and grace of God righteousness will prevail, truth will be victorious and the Lord, who was born in Bethlehem, will grant to us his grace and strength and power to overcome all obstacles as we make our journey through life.

I congratulate you all, my beloved, on the Nativity of Christ."

Concelebrating with His Holiness on the night of the feast of the Nativity were: the chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchy the metropolitan of Voskresensk Dionysius, the first auxiliary bishop of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia for the city of Moscow; the chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate the metropolitan of Volokolamsk Anthony; deputy chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchy the bishop of Pavlovsky Posad Siluan; deputy chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchy the bishop of Zelenograd Sabba; the sacristan of the Christ the Saviour Cathedral archpriest Mikhail Ryazantsev; the personal secretary of His Holiness the Patriarch archimandrite Alexei (Turikov); and members of the Moscow clergy.

The liturgical hymns were performed by the Patriarchal choir of the Christ the Saviour Cathedral under the direction of choir master I.B. Tolkachev.

In attendance in the cathedral were: the secretary of state for the Union State of Russia and Belarus D.F. Mezentsev; the chairman of the Moscow City Duma A.V. Shaposhnikov; the director of the department for nationalities policy, interregional links and tourism for the city of Moscow V.I. Suchkov; the chairman of the Synodal Department for Church Public Relations and the Mass Media V.P. Legoida; and the chairman of the oversight committee of the Rossiya Pravoslavnaya public movement M.M. Ivanov.

At the Litany of Fervent Supplication special petitions were said, while the Primate of the Russian Church read the prayer for Holy Russia.

The Nativity Address of His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to the archpastors, the pastors, deacons, monks and nuns and all the faithful children of the Russian Orthodox Church was read aloud by archpriest Mikhail Ryazantsev.

At the end of the Liturgy, hymns were sung on the occasion of the feast, after which His Holiness Patriarch Kirill delivered a sermon to the assembled faithful in his capacity as Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Representatives of the Patriarchal volunteer youth movement congratulated the Primate of the Russian

Orthodox Church on the occasion of the Nativity of Christ in the gallery of the Christ the Saviour Cathedral, reports the press service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

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