



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill chairs Holy Synod's first session in 2023



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On 16th March 2023, at the Patriarchal and Synodal Residence in St Daniel's Monastery in Moscow, the Holy Synod began its session under the chairmanship of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church greeted the Holy Synod members and delivered an opening speech, in which he said:

“We have assembled for this regular session and I would like to note that it is the Holy Synod's 80th meeting since my election to the Patriarchal throne. We can say that it is at least a round-number date, if not a jubilee.

“I have just made a televised address and expressed my deepest concern over the latest developments in Kiev. The Kievan authorities, while declaring their commitment to following the European path of development and hence democracy and their respect for human rights and freedoms, are flagrantly violating these rights and freedoms, practically expelling the monastic community from the Kiev Caves Lavra. How is that not an offence to the very principle of human rights and freedoms? How is it then possible to trust the regime which, while claiming its adherence to the democratic way of development, at the same time outrageously violates these very rights and freedoms – in a manner they were not always infringed on even in the Soviet times? This ambiguity reveals some innermost conflict within the Ukrainian society, some ontological untruth.

“We can only pray that the Lord give strength to our brothers and sisters in Ukraine to endure this new persecution, for there is no other name for what is going on. We all must stand in prayer together with them. We all must exert every effort, working in liaison with international organisations and all our partners to draw the attention to this dreadful outrage in the centre of Europe. Nothing good will come out of it! The entire Soviet Union with its atheistic might, with its determination to carry out anti-religious work tried to extirpate the Orthodox faith, to close monasteries. We know how it all ended – the atheistic authorities were gone and the Church survived. Why? Because the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Mt 16:18). From time to time the Lord allows ordeals and sorrows to befall every one of us – perhaps so that we may be fortified in our faith and our hope in God, be more fervent in prayer and sensitive as pastors in how we deal with the problems troubling our flock today.

“Again and again I call upon all of you to pray for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, for our brothers and sisters and to plead with the Lord that by His power and grace He may strengthen our brothers suffering as confessors.”

The meeting proceeded according to its agenda. The minutes will be published after the session.

The list of permanent members of the Holy Synod includes: Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine; Metropolitan Vladimir of Chisinau and All Moldova; Metropolitan Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan, head of the Metropolitan area in the Republic of Kazakhstan; Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Uzbekistan, head of the Metropolitan area of Central Asia; Metropolitan Varsonofy of St. Petersburg and Ladoga; Metropolitan Pavel of Krutitsy and Kolomna, Patriarchal vicar for the Moscow Metropolia; Metropolitan Veniamin of Minsk and Zaslavsk, Patriarchal Exarch for All Belarus; Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations;; and Metropolitan Dionisy of Voskresensk, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Invited to the meeting as temporary members were Metropolitan Amvrosy of Tver and Kashin; Metropolitan Tikhon of Pskov and Porkhov; Metropolitan Leonid of Klin, Patriarchal Exarch of Africa;

Archbishop Feodor of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky; and Bishop Pyotr of Kalachinsk and Muromtsevo.

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