His Holiness Patriarch Kirill presides over Holy Synod meeting



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On 16th May 2023, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church held its regular session at the Patriarchal and Synodal Residence in St. Daniel Monastery in Moscow under the chairmanship of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. Taking part in the meeting were:

· permanent members of the Holy Synod, namely 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;

· temporary members of the Holy Synod, namely Metropolitan Lev of Novgorod and Staraya Rusa; Metropolitan Arseny of Lipetsk and Zadonsk; Metropolitan Kirill of Kazan and Tatarstan; Metropolitan Sergy of Singapore and South-East Asia, Patriarchal Exarch of South-East Asia; and Bishop Nikolai of Severobaikalsk and Sosnovo-Ozerskoye.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church delivered an opening address, saying in particular:

"I wholeheartedly greet all Synod members at our regular meeting. To begin our session, I would like to tell you what preceded a historic event – return of the miracle-working icon of the Holy Trinity painted by the Venerable Andrew Rublev in the 15th century to the Russian Orthodox Church for veneration.

This is how events have unfolded. I spoke with the head of state on the matter and prior to that had sent the following letter to Mr Anton Vaino, Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office:

'Dear Anton Eduardovich,

As you know, the State Tretyakov Gallery has in its collection the icon of the Holy Trinity painted by the Venerable Andrew Rublev in the 15th century. Until 1917, the icon belonged to the Holy Trinity and St Sergius Lavra and was in the iconostasis of the Holy Trinity Cathedral. This year the Feast of the Holy Trinity falls on 4th June. Considering special historical and cultural value of the icon, I would deem it proper to make arrangements for it to be brought from the Tretyakov Gallery to the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow for a period of two weeks in order that numerous believers may have access to it. The Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation has no objections to bringing the icon to the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour for the specified period.'

"Such was my modest request addressed to the head of the Presidential Administration.

"As you know, in response, the President of the Russian Federation took a historic decision to return the icon of the Holy Trinity to the Russian Orthodox Church. We could only dream about it, for the holy icon to be given back to the Church so that our people may pray before it, asking God' blessings for the country and the Church. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and

to all those of his aides who helped make it happen. I think we should send a letter of appreciation to Vladimir Vladimirovich.

“God willing, may the return of this holy icon to our Church for permanent veneration strengthen faith in our people so that the prayers poured out before it may be heard by our Lord. And today these prayers are full of supplications for peace and welfare of our homeland, for the cessation of any internecine strife, so that peace and prosperity may be restored in the Russian land. May the Lord hearken to our prayers lifted up before this icon. I suggest singing Many Years to the President of our country.

“Before presenting our meeting’s agenda, I would like to tell you about one more important event – the return of the shrine of the Holy Right-Believing Grand Prince Alexander Nevsky from the Hermitage Museum to the Trinity Cathedral of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra. It is also an event of great historic importance.

“The shrine was made under direct instructions of Empress Elizabeth, daughter of Emperor Peter I. In times of unlawful misappropriation of church valuables, disguised as their confiscation, great many sacred objects ended up in other countries or private collections; some were transferred to museums. That was a sign of madness that engulfed our country as its leadership were pursuing a dreadful mystical goal – to do away with Orthodox faith, to eradicate it from people’s hearts and souls. Yet, life showed that their plans had failed! And not because the servants of the Church were strong, clever or convincing, but because the Holy Spirit lives and acts in the Church. By the power of God, the Church revived and now holy objects are being returned to it.

“So I would like to thank one again the President of our country who has taken this decision. God willing, may this good endeavour – return of holy objects – be continued.”

Then the Holy Synod members proceeded to deliberate over the items on the meeting’s agenda.

The minutes will be published after the meeting.

Based on the information provided by
Press Service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

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