



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

Address by the DECR Chairman to the participants of the conference "Confluence of Conscience: Uniting Faith Leaders for Planetary Resurgence"



Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, sent his address to the participants of the conference "Confluence of Conscience: Uniting Faith Leaders for Planetary Resurgence" (6-7 November 2023, Abu Dhabi, UAE).

The address reads as follows:

Dear participants of the conference,

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the organisers of the conference and to all the participants for their attention to the pressing problem of the relationship between humankind and the world around us. It seems timely and right to discuss and develop initiatives to foster a careful attitude towards God's creation in society.

Human beings bear a special responsibility for the preservation of the world given to us by the Creator. The Russian Orthodox Church, in its attitude to environmental problems, believes that the world around us changes in accordance with the inner world of man[i]. Therefore, the poor state of ecology and climate that we see today is largely a

consequence of the consumerist and selfish human attitude to nature and its gifts.

At creation, man was called to preserve and cultivate the world around him (Genesis 2:15). And yet, human beings continue to exploit the planet mercilessly to this day because they follow the false notion that they are the masters of the universe. Today, we see particularly clearly how many people choose to serve their passions rather than God, fuelling the growth of irresponsible consumption and the resulting environmental degradation. Anthropocentrism is the cause of today's global economic, food and political crisis.

Both Christianity and other traditional religions consider abstinence and moderation in the consumption of food and other natural resources as an important aspect of human spiritual life. In the Holy Scripture and the Holy Tradition, we see many instances of harmonious interaction between people and nature. They are a reflection of that Primordial Paradise where man, before falling into sin, was a true custodian of the earthly world and not an irresponsible consumer.

On this basis, the Russian Orthodox Church fully supports the idea of a joint call of religious leaders to respect the environment. It is necessary to preach abstinence in the consumption of earthly resources based on spiritual values and the cooperation of believers to overcome environmental problems. We hope that our words will be heard by the powers that be, and will help to save and restore our common home - planet Earth.

I wish all forum participants meaningful discussions and fruitful results!

Respectfully,

	<p style="text-align: center;">+ANTHONY Metropolitan of Volokolamsk Chairman Department for External Church Relations Moscow Patriarchate</p>
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^[1] *The position of the Russian Orthodox Church on the issues of ecology.* The document was adopted by the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church, February 4, 2013. Link: <https://www.orth->

transfiguration.org/statement-on-the-environment-by-the-russian-orthodox-church/

Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/90973/>