Chairman of the DECR participates in the presentation of the Russian-language edition of Pope Benedict's book Jesus of Nazareth.



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On 17th January 2024 there took place at the Pokrovskiye Vorota Cultural Centre in Moscow the presentation of the new Russian-language edition of Pope Benedict XVI's book Jesus of Nazareth.

Attending the event were: the chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate the metropolitan of Volokolamsk Anthony, the ordinary of the Roman Catholic archdiocese of the Mother of God in Moscow archbishop Paolo Pezzi, the first deputy of the chairman of the Spiritual Directorate of Russian Muslims Damir Mukhetdinov, the Russian ambassador to the Vatican fr om 2013 to 2023 Alexander Avdeyev, the president of the Sapienta et Scienta Academy and compiler of the Italian edition of the complete collected works of Pope Benedict XVI Pierluca Azzaro (online) and invited guests.

Heading the presentation was the director of the Rossia Christiana Foundation from the Pokrovskiye Vorota Cultural Centre Giovanni Parravacini.

The first deputy of the Spiritual Directorate of Russian Muslims noted in the work under consideration that Pope Benedict XVI displayed his profound erudition in referring to a great number of sources and referencing many theologians. Damir Mukhetdinov expressed the hope that people within the Muslim community would also be interested in acquainting themselves with this work.

Alexander Avdeyev spoke to those present of his knowledge of the theological view and works of Pope Benedict XVI, in particular those that touched upon a Christian understanding of the problems of European culture. “In his depth of thought and power of influencing Christian, Muslim and other minds he was a great theologian, a great philosopher and great pope,” said the former Russian ambassador to the Vatican.

Actual member of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society I.V. Lapshin particularly emphasized that the publication of this book in Russian would make a contribution to the development of inter-Christian dialogue.

In his speech Pierluca Azzaro thanked all those through whose labours the Russian version of Pope Benedict XVI’s book Jesus of Nazareth was made possible. He also shared his memories of personally meeting the pontiff.

The metropolitan of Volokolamsk Anthony, who is the author of one of the forewords to the book (the second foreword was written by the secretary of state of the Holy See cardinal Pietro Parolin), in his few words noted that he was personally acquainted with the late pope, met with him on numerous occasions and “could observe at first hand how much importance he attached to the development of cooperation between the Catholic Church and and the Christian East generally and the Russian Orthodox Church in particular.”

The present trilogy is without exaggeration the crowning achievement of the theological work of Pope Benedict XVI, the head of the DECR also stated: “As the author himself said, it was conceived of as an educational work accessible to a broad readership. However, when we open it, it is impossible not to be struck by Joseph Ratzinger’s colossal erudition which demonstrated in the fullest sense of the word a ‘universal’ example of mastering the entire wealth of traditional Christian exegetics and at the same time of being able to navigate the problems of contemporary philosophical hermeneutics, textual criticism and biblical studies as a whole.”

“At the same time, this demonstration of a brilliant understanding of the colossal material without doubt pursues the pastoral aim of offering to people in the twenty-first century an integral, unreduced and inexhaustibly profound image of Christ which is a genuine response to the accumulated issues of both wh ere human history is heading as a whole and the meaning of each individual life,” said metropolitan Anthony.

According to the chairman of the DECR, the new edition of the trilogy allows the Russian-speaking reader to appreciate the work of Joseph Ratzinger as a unique collection which comprises a single, indivisible whole. Metropolitan Anthony also pointed out the high quality of the translation which in full measure reveals the wealth of original content. He then thanked the Sapient et Scient Academy and all those involved in the bringing to fruition of this publishing project for the work they had done.

Archbishop Paolo Pezzi also shared with those present his impressions of Jesus of Nazareth by Pope Benedict XVI.

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