



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrates moleben in Donskoy Monastery at the shrine with St. Tikhon's relics



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On 7th April 2024, 3rd Sunday of Lent, of the Veneration of the Cross, Feast of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos, commemoration of the demise of Saint Tikhon the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia (1925), after celebrating the Divine Liturgy in the Holy Annunciation Cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' visited the Donskoy Stavropegic Monastery in Moscow, which is home to the relics of the Holy Patriarch Tikhon.

As the Patriarchal Press Service **reports**, in the Great Cathedral of the Donskoy Monastery, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church celebrated a moleben.

Concelebrating with His Holiness were Metropolitan Grigory of Voskresensk, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, Patriarchal first vicar for the city of Moscow; Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate; Metropolitan Nikandr of Naro-Fominsk, chairman of the Financial and Economic Administration of the Moscow Patriarchate; Metropolitan Feognost of Kashira, chairman of the Synodal Department for Monasteries and Monasticism, abbot of the Donskoy Monastery; Archbishop Foma of Odintsovo and Krasnogorsk, head of the Administrative Secretariat of the Moscow Patriarchate, rector of the Holy Theophany Cathedral in Yelokhovo in Moscow; Archbishop Savva of Zelenograd, deputy chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; Bishop Alexy of Ramenskoye, private secretary to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill; Protopresbyter Vladimir Divakov, secretary of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' for the city of Moscow; Priest Vasily Losev, head of the Legal Service of the Moscow Metropolia; and ordained coenobites of the Donskoy Monastery.

Among those in attendance were Mr Sergei Rudov, deputy head of the World Russian People's Council; Mr Boris Listov, chairman of the Board of JSC "Rosselkhozbank"; and soldiers of the 1st Semyonovsky Independent Rifle Regiment.

After the prayer service, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church venerated the relics of the Holy Patriarch Tikhon and the Don Icon of the Mother of God.

Having greeted His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, Metropolitan Feognost of Kashira presented him with an icon of the Intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos.

His Holiness delivered a homily, saying in particular:

"On this festive day we are commemorating Saint Tikhon the Patriarch of All Russia. Some call him a confessor, but I think the day will come when we will proclaim him a martyr because the theomachist authorities could not tolerate that the Patriarch of All Rus' was still alive, albeit in confinement in the Donskoy Monastery. The very fact of the Patriarch's existence was the power drawing people to him, the power inspiring Orthodox Christians not only to dream, but also to pray about the revival of the Holy Rus', annihilation of the theomachist regime and cessation of the dreadful persecutions which came hand in hand with the desecration of shrines and assault on the very spirit of our people.

"Since neither of us belongs to that generation, we cannot even imagine all the vileness, all the evil, all the slander that were brought down on the Russian Church – the Mother Church which throughout a thousand years had been spiritually nurturing people and in spiritual and cultural sense working for the sake of their prosperity. Everything was trampled on and covered with dirt; clergymen were accused of every possible crime as counter-revolutionaries; and of course the most "terrible counter-revolutionary"

was living here. Therefore, when they tell us that His Holiness Tikhon died a natural death, it is hard to believe. Perhaps, the time will come when we will say that he was not a confessor, but a martyr. St. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus', was too dangerous to the theomachist authorities that were overthrowing everything, for he remained as a spiritual symbol of Rus' and a spiritual force that gave hope to Orthodox Christians for the revival of Rus', revival of the Church and cessation of persecutions."

"Saint Tikhon gave his life, remaining faithful to the Holy Church, faithful to his episcopal oath, faithful to his vocation as Patriarch of All Rus'. He rejected all attempts the theomachist authorities made to persuade him to bless the schismatics – those who, in order to please the authorities, wanted to carry out such reforms that would simply ruin the Church. That is why Saint Tikhon is so important for our Church's contemporary history and never, under no circumstances must our Church and our Orthodox people forget the great name of this saint pleasing unto God, a humble elder and a Patriarch strong in spirit, who refused to make any concessions to the theomachist regime and stayed loyal to everything he had sworn allegiance to through his priestly, episcopal and Patriarchal ministry.

"As we commemorate Saint Tikhon, let us also remember all those who worked with him, his associates and brothers, most of whom died in the meat grinder of the 20th-century persecutions in Russia. He was surrounded by trustworthy, kind and courageous people. Perhaps, that also gave him strength to resist the authorities attempting to persuade him to bless the schismatics who were ready to do everything in order to weaken and then destroy the Russian Orthodox Church.

"By the prayers of St. Tikhon the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' may our Lord strengthen our people's faith. May our national consciousness, which is closely linked with the Orthodox faith, be as strong as ever. And may our Church be as strong as ever in carrying out its missionary and pastoral work. And may our Lord give us all strength and ability to courageously defend our homeland and Orthodox faith if need be."

Photo by the Press Service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'