



## The 14th All-Diaspora Orthodox Youth Conference opens in Germany



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On June 25, the 14th All-Diaspora Orthodox Youth Conference on “Preserving Orthodox Identity and Heritage Abroad” began its work in Michelsberg, the suburb of Stuttgart, Germany.

Attending are 130 young men and women from Australia, Austria, Germany, Canada, the USA – a total of 11 countries.

Taking part in the conference are Bishop Irinei of London and Western Europe, Bishop Job of Stuttgart, clergy from Australia, Germany, Canada and the USA, Patriarchia.ru reports with reference to the website of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

Before the conference, archpriest Gregory Joyce, secretary of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America, celebrated a prayer service. Liturgic chants were sung by a combined choir of the conference participants.

Archpriest Andrei Sommer, vice-president of the ROCOR Synodal Youth Department, addressed the participants with a welcoming speech.

“Your Graces! Dear participants of the 14th All-Diaspora Youth Conference!

We have gathered here in the Swabian Albs, near Stuttgart, to continue the more than 50-year tradition of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and to hold the 14th All-Diaspora Youth Conference.

This conference has brought together young people from all over the world – we have a total of 130 participants from 11 countries – for prayerful fellowship, instruction and acquaintances.

The first All-Diaspora Conference was held in Canada in 1973. At that time, more than 200 people from 10 countries took part in it. At the opening of the conference, Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky) addressed the youth with the words:

“It is better to have a bird in your hands than a crane in the sky. Therefore, do not deal with many problems at the conference. Create an organ capable of working and giving directions for further fruitful activity and practically helping your brethren spiritually to live on earth as Orthodox Christians.”

The theme of our conference, “Preserving Orthodox Identity and Heritage Abroad”, opens up an opportunity for us to consider a question “Who am I? And how can I keep my faith in today’s world?”

We have gathered all of you from different countries in 10 groups with the task of inventing and presenting programs, helping young people to realize the important role of Orthodox identity in the spiritual life of people and the life of the Church. Each group will have to plan a youth project, which can theoretically be used as a model for work in the parish. Your projects will be recorded on our Youtube channel so that all dioceses and parishes have access to the source – the library of data of the youth missionary database.

Each of you has numerous special talents. Let us recall the Gospel parable of the talents, known to all of us, how one master gave his servants talents and left them for a while, and upon his return called the servants to him and demanded from them an account of how they used the talents entrusted to them and menacingly took away the talents from one who simply buried his talent and did not multiply what the Lord gave him.

All of us who have gathered here at the All-Diaspora Youth Conference have a responsibility to multiply the talents that God has given us. We are here to help each other multiply our talents as well. I am happy to tell you that during this week you will meet peers from distant Australia, from different European

countries, from Canada, from different states of America, including the Hawaiian Islands.”

Bishop Irinei then addressed the participants. In his speech he reflected on the preservation of identity and cultural heritage while living outside of one’s historical homeland.

On June 26, addresses were offered by Bishop Job; archpriest Ilya Limberger, rector of the Church of St. Nicholas in Stuttgart; and deacon Patrick Hinds of the Eastern American Diocese.

Then the youth divided into groups and, under the guidance of advisors from the host diocese, began developing projects that would be realized in parishes and youth departments.

In the evening, Metropolitan Nicholas of Eastern America and New York, the first hierarch of the ROCOR, met with the participants via video and blessed them for their future endeavours.

The 14th All-Diaspora Orthodox Youth Conference will continue through July 1.

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