



## 3rd CICC Christian Youth Forum opens in Konevets Monastery



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On July 8, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Christian Youth Forum **organized** under the auspices of the Christian Interconfessional Consultative Committee (CICC) began its work in the Konevets Monastery of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, Vyborg Diocese. Timed to the Year of the Family, the forum's theme is Christian Youth and Family Values.

Bishop Varnava of Vyborg and Priozersk opened the forum by greeting all those present on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus'. As Bishop Varnava noted in his speech, it was symbolic that the forum on Christian family values opened on the Day of Family, Love and Fidelity, commemoration day of the holy spouses – the Righteous Prince Peter and Princess Fevronia. "Today's feast draws our attention to the true Gospel values that make it possible for people in our society to build up close-knit families," he added.

Mr M.A. Kolotushkin, head of the Department for Cooperation with Religious Associations under the

Committee for Local Self-Government and Interethnic and Interconfessional Relations of the Leningrad Region, read out a message of greetings from Governor of the Leningrad Region A.Yu. Drozdenko. Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), secretary for inter-Christian relations of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, conveyed to all those present greetings from the DECR chairman, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk. As Father Stefan pointed out in his speech, the forum "has become a stable platform of interconfessional dialogue for the young generation, allowing them to resist the present-day threats to Christian morality."

Among the speakers were also the following representatives of Christian confessions: Deacon Myuron Gaybaryan, a cleric of the Rostov Vicariate of the Diocese of Russia and New Nakhichevan of the Armenian Apostolic Church; Pastor G.O. Pivovarov, assistant to the Archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Russia; Senior Pastor V.A. Motso of the Awakening Community of the Russian Church of Christians of Evangelical Faith in the city of Cherepovets; Pastor A.A. Shapovalov, deputy plenipotentiary of the Head Bishop of the Russian Union of Christians of Evangelical Faith (Pentecostals) in the Leningrad Region and the city of St. Petersburg; presbyter V.V. Tolkachev of the community of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in Vyborg; and Mr N.S. Smagin, assistant for public relations to the head of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Northwestern Conference. Bishop Ivan Laptev of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria delivered an online address.

Taking part in the forum are delegations from the Republics of Belarus and Armenia. The Belarusian Orthodox Church is represented by Priest Dmitry Bovkunovich, chairman of the Department for Youth Affairs of the Belarusian Exarchate.

In the course of four days of the forum's work, the delegates will participate in various seminars, master classes, joint Gospel evenings and other events.