



On the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrated Great Vespers at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior



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On the evening of January 7, 2025, the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' celebrated Great Vespers at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior in Moscow, as reported by the Patriarchal Press Service.

His Holiness was joined in the service by: Metropolitan Juvenaly (Poyarkov); Metropolitan Pavel of Krutitsy and Kolomna, Patriarchal Vicar of the Moscow Metropolis; Metropolitan Gregory of Voskresensk, Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, First Vicar of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' for Moscow, and Abbot of the Novospassky Stavropegial Monastery; Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations; Metropolitan Nikandr of Vladimir and Suzdal, Head of the Financial and Economic Administration of the Moscow Patriarchate;

Metropolitan Valentin (Mishchuk); Metropolitan Panteleimon (Dolganov); Metropolitan Tikhon (Emelyanov); Metropolitan Seraphim (Zaloznitsky); Metropolitan Ignaty (Pologrudov); Metropolitan Theognost of Kashira, Chairman of the Synodal Department for Monasteries and Monasticism, and Abbot of the Donskoy Stavropegial Monastery; Metropolitan Ioann (Roshchin); Metropolitan Arseny of Zvenigorod; Archbishop Philaret (Karagodin); Archbishop Thomas of Odintsovo and Krasnogorsk, Head of the Administrative Secretariat of the Moscow Patriarchate; Archbishop Aksy of Podolsk and Lyubertsy; Archbishop Savva of Zelenograd, Deputy Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; Bishop Guriy (Shalimov); Bishop Tikhon of Vidnoye, Abbot of the Catherine Stavropegial Monastery; Bishop Pankraty of Troitsk, Chairman of the Synodal Commission for Canonization of Saints and the Synodal Commission for Iconography, and Abbot of the Valaam Transfiguration Stavropegial Monastery; Bishop Roman of Serpukhov, Abbot of the Vysochsky Stavropegial Monastery; Bishop Hieronymus (Chernyshov); Bishop Nektary (Frolov); Bishop Panteleimon of Vereya; Bishop Nikolay of Balashikha and Orekhovo-Zuevo, Chief Editor of the Moscow Patriarchate Publishing House; Bishop Siluan of Pavlovsky Posad, Deputy Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; Bishop Seraphim of Istra, Chairman of the Synodal Department for Youth Affairs; Bishop Alexy of Solnechnogorsk, Abbot of the Danilov Stavropegial Monastery; Bishop Ignaty (Grigoryev); Bishop Porfiry of Ozyory, Abbot of the Solovetsky Transfiguration Stavropegial Monastery; Bishop Joseph of Mozhaisk, Abbot of the Vvedensky Stavropegial Monastery (Optina Pustyn); Bishop Kirill of Sergiev Posad and Dmitrov, Abbot of the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra; Bishop Alexy of Ramenskoye, Personal Secretary to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill; Bishop Methody of Yegoryevsk, Acting Chairman of the Synodal Biblical and Theological Commission, Rector of the Orthodox St. Tikhon Humanitarian University, and Abbot of the Nikolo-Ugreshsky Stavropegial Monastery; Protopresbyter Vladimir Divakov, Secretary to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' for Moscow; Protopriest Mikhail Ryazantsev, Sacristan of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior; Protopriest Nikolay Balashov, Advisor to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'; Protopriest Maxim Kozlov, Chairman of the Education Committee of the Russian Orthodox Church; Protopriest Nikolay Lischenyuk, Deputy Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations; Protopriest Igor Yakimchuk, Deputy Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations; Archimandrite Stefan (Tarakanov), Deputy Chairman of the Synodal Department for Monasteries and Monasticism, and Abbot of the Savvino-Storozhevsky Stavropegial Monastery; Protopriest Dionisy Kazantsev, Secretary to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' for the Moscow Region; Priest Vasily Losev, Head of the Legal Service of the Moscow Metropolis, and other clergy from the Moscow region.

Among those concelebrating were representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches at the Moscow Patriarchal See: Metropolitan Niphon of Philippopolis (Antiochian Orthodox Church); Bishop Stefan of Remesiana (Serbian Orthodox Church); Archimandrite Serafim (Shemyatovsky) of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia; and Protopriest Daniel Andrejuk (Orthodox Church in America).

The service was attended by abbesses of stavropegial monasteries, Moscow clergy, members of parish councils of Moscow churches, staff of synodal institutions, and numerous faithful.

The choir of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, under the direction of I.B. Tolkachev, performed the hymns of Great Vespers. The Patriarchal service was broadcast live on TV channels "TV Center," "Spas," "Soyuz," and on the official portal of the Russian Orthodox Church, patriarchia.ru, with commentary by Professor A.K. Svetozarsky of the Moscow Theological Academy.

The Gospel passage was read by the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church from an ancient altar Gospel dating back to the time of Empress Elizabeth Petrovna, which is brought out from the altar of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior only twice a year—on the Nativity and Paschal Great Vespers.

At the conclusion of the service, on behalf of the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Juvenaly (Poyarkov) congratulated His Holiness Patriarch Kirill on the Feast of the Nativity of Christ:

"Your Holiness, Vladyka and Father!

On behalf of the Holy Synod, the episcopate, and your millions-strong flock, I sincerely congratulate you on the great Feast of the Nativity of Christ!

On this holy day, lengthy speeches are not customary, but I cannot refrain from bearing witness before you and the entire Church that we all, Your Holiness, thank the Lord for granting us such a Primate who proclaims the Word of God not only to Holy Rus' but to the entire world.

Thank you, Your Holiness, for tirelessly explaining the meaning and significance of Church life in your many sermons, guiding your flock toward the Kingdom of Heaven. May the Lord, who has come into the world, reward you for your service and help you continue to bear the burden of Primatial ministry for many years to come.

May the Lord grant you many and blessed years!"

Metropolitan Juvenaly presented His Holiness with an ancient icon of the Savior and a bouquet of white roses.

On behalf of the Orthodox youth of Moscow, His Holiness was congratulated by Sofia Sviridova, an employee of the Moscow Diocesan Youth Department, and Ilya Komarov, a member of the Orthodox youth organization "Lestvitsa" at the Church of All Saints in Sokol.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill delivered a Primatial address to the gathered faithful.

Following the tradition, the hierarchs, clergy, and laity of the Moscow Eparchy extended their greetings to their ruling bishop.

After the service, a brief conversation took place behind the Altar between His Holiness and two children: 15-year-old Ivan Stukalov and 9-year-old Tanya Pavlova.

In November of last year, Ivan returned to Russia with his family after spending nine years in the Czech Republic. From a young age, he dreamed of meeting the Primate of the Russian Church, and more recently, he has expressed a desire to become a priest. Ivan wrote a letter to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, requesting a personal meeting.

Tanya Pavlova, who has intellectual and speech development challenges, attends a school for children with special needs. As part of the nationwide "Wish Tree" campaign, Tanya wished to meet His Holiness Patriarch Kirill.

Both children are actively involved in church life: Ivan serves as an altar boy at the Church of the Holy Trinity in Khoroshevo, Moscow, while Tanya regularly attends services and receives Holy Communion.

Ivan congratulated His Holiness on the Nativity of Christ and presented a drawing of the Patriarch, while Tanya gifted him a handmade card. The Primate of the Russian Church gave the children commemorative gifts.

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