



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

Condolences of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill on the passing of the Primate of the Albanian Orthodox Church



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His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' expressed his condolences to the Holy Synod of the Albanian Orthodox Church on the passing of His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania. His Beatitude reposed in the Lord on January 25, 2025, at the age of 96.

To the Holy Synod of the Albanian Orthodox Church

**Your Eminences and Your Graces,
Beloved brothers the archpastors,**

It has grieved me deeply to learn of the passing away of His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania.

On behalf of the archpastors, pastors, monastics and laypeople of the Russian Orthodox Church and on my behalf I express sincere condolences over this heavy loss for the sisterly Albanian Church and our entire common Orthodox family.

The Lord granted His Beatitude Anastasios a long life, which from his early years he devoted entirely to the zealous labours in the Vineyard of Christ. Having responded to the call of the Saviour to preach the word of God *unto the uttermost part of the earth* (Acts 1:8), he, while still a layman, embarked on the path of missionary work. Over the years of his ministry on the African continent, where his talents as an ardent preacher, pastor and builder of the parochial and diocesan life manifested itself notably, he became a model of the true missionary, *zealous of good works* (Tit 2:14).

The Russian Church, which endured terrible persecutions at the hands of the godless authorities, holds the late Primate in particular respect for his selfless labours aimed at the revival of the Albanian Orthodox Church, which also suffered from severe persecutions under the communist regime. Archbishop Anastasios' high standing both in the Orthodox world and in the entire Christendom, along with his academic ties and invaluable experience gained over the years of his service in Africa, contributed to the successful restoration of the fully fledged church life in the Albanian land under his wise guidance.

I take the death of His Beatitude Anastasios as a personal loss. We had a long-standing brotherly relationship. He visited the Russian Orthodox Church on repeated occasions and took part in our important church celebrations. I have very warm memories of my visit to Albania at his invitation in 2018. Back then, the Lord vouchsafed me to see at first hand the good fruits of the decades-long zealous work of the late Archbishop and his brothers the members of the Holy Synod of the Albanian Church.

Being one of the oldest and most respected Orthodox Primates, he was known as an adherent of the sacred canons, as a guardian of the ecclesiastical, including patristic tradition of the Orthodox Church. Faithful to Christ and His Holy Church, firm in his beliefs, he became like *a wise man, which built his house upon a rock* (Mt 7:24).

May the Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life, give rest to the soul of His faithful servant in the heavenly dwellings where there is neither sickness nor sorrow, and no more sighing, but life everlasting.

Eternal and good memory to the deceased Archbishop Anastasios!

With love in the Lord and deep condolences,

**+KIRILL
PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUS'**

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