



DECR chairman presents Patriarchal award to Primate of Armenian Apostolic Church



DECR Communication Service, 18/03/2025

On 18th March 2025, the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church **which is currently visiting Armenia** attended a reception that took place at the residence of His Holiness Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, in Etchmiadzin.

With the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, who leads the delegation, handed over to the Head of the Armenian Apostolic Church a Patriarchal award – the Order of St. Alexis the Metropolitan of Kiev, Moscow and All Rus', 1st Class. The award was timed to the 25th anniversary of Patriarch Karekin's Primatial service.

The DECR chairman read out a message of greetings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and

All Rus', in which the Primate of the Russian Church mentioned some of the achievements of Catholicos Karekin II, who "continues with zeal the work of St. Gregory the Enlightener and his other renowned predecessors, strives to preserve Christian identity of the Armenian people and inspires the faithful by his own example to lead life in all godliness and honesty (1 Tim 2:2)." In his message, Patriarch Kirill pointed out that the Primate of the Armenian Church had made a substantial contribution to the revival of spiritual life in Armenia after the period of godless persecutions, which manifested itself in "the opening of new churches and the restoration of fully fledged parish life." He also expressed appreciation to Catholicos Karekin for his "invariably good attitude towards the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian spiritual tradition."

The Head of the Armenian Apostolic Church conveyed his heartfelt gratitude to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, saying in particular, "I am deeply touched by His Holiness' regard and warm attitude, which serve as an expression of the centuries-old cooperation and close ties between our two Holy Churches, as well as of our long-standing fellowship and an important contribution of the Armenian community to the state, public and cultural life of the Russian Federation." Catholicos Karekin also thanked the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church "for his prayers and support for the Armenian people during the tragic war [in Nagorno-Karabakh]," expressed his appreciation "for the efforts Patriarch Kirill had made to ensure that the life and activities of the Dadivank Monastery continued uninterrupted and to guarantee safety of the Armenian clergy." He expressed support to the Moscow Patriarchate in view of the situation in Ukraine and said that despite the ordeals and hardships that befell the peoples of Armenia and Russia, he gives praise to God for the continued rise in the relationships between the Armenian Apostolic and the Russian Orthodox Churches, bearing new fruits thanks to their close cooperation in various spheres. The Head of the Armenian Church also noted that His Holiness Patriarch Kirill devotes "close paternal attention" to the Armenian community in Russia, "their spiritual and national life," and lifted up prayers "for good health and fruitful archpastoral service" of his "spiritual brother, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, for many years, as well as for the welfare and prosperity of the Russian Orthodox Church."

The Russian Orthodox Church's delegation also included Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), DECR deputy chairman; and Priest Nikolai Vasin, secretary to the DECR chairman. Among the representatives of the Armenian Apostolic Church who attended the reception in Etchmiadzin were Archbishop Nathan Hovhannisian, director of the External Relations and Protocol Department of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin; Archbishop Arshak Khachatryan, chancellor of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin; Archbishop Yezras Nersissian, head of the Diocese of Russia and New Nakhichevan; Bishop Vrtanes Abrahamian, head of the Diocese of Artsakh; Archimandrite Garegin Hambardzumyan, director of the Inter-Church Relations Department; Archpriest Vahram Melikyan, head of the Private Office of the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians; as well as numerous hierarchs, clergymen and laypeople. Attending the event was also Mr Sergei Kopyrkin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Armenia.

That same day in the evening, Catholicos Karekin II gave an official dinner in honour of the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/92979/>