



His Holiness Patriarch celebrates Paschal vespers on Easter Sunday at Christ the Saviour Cathedral.



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On 20th April on Easter Sunday His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill celebrated Paschal Vespers at the Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow.

Concelebrating with His Holiness were: metropolitan Juvenaly (Poyarkov); the metropolitan of Krutitsk and Kolomna Paul, the Patriarch auxiliary bishop for the Moscow metropolitanate; the metropolitan of Voskresensk Gregory, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarch, first auxiliary bishop to the Patriarch of Moscow and All for the city of Moscow and vicar abbot of Novospassky monastery; the metropolitan of Volokolamsk Anthony, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate; the metropolitan of Zvenigorod Arsenius; metropolitan John (Roschin); the archbishop of Odintsovo and Krasnogorsk Thomas, director of the administrative secretariate of the Moscow Patriarchy; the archbishop of Podolsk and Lyubertsy Axius; the archbishop of Zelenograd Sabba, acting

chairman of the Synodal missionary department and deputy chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchy; bishop Gurius (Shalimov); the bishop of Vidno Tikhon, vicar abbot of Saint Catherine's Stauropegic Monastery; bishop Jerome (Chernyshov); the bishop of Balashikha and Orekhov-Zuyevo Nicholas, director and editor-in-chief of the publishing house of the Moscow Patriarchate; the bishop of Pavlovo-Posad Siluan, deputy chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchy; the bishop of Istra Seraphim, chairman of the Synodal department for youth affairs; the bishop of Sergiev Posad and Dmitrov Cyril, vicar abbot of the Monastery of the Holy Trinity and Saint Sergius; the bishop of Ramenskoye Alexius, personal secretary to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill; the bishop of Yegorievsk Methodius, acting chairman of the Synodal Biblical and Theological Commission, rector of the Saint Tikhon Humanitarian University and vicar abbot of the Saint Nicholas Stauropegic Monastery in Ugreshi; protopresbyter Vladimir Divakov, secretary to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia for the city of Moscow; archpriest Mikhail Ryazantsev, sacristan of the Christ the Saviour Cathedral; archpriest Nikolai Balashov, advisor to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia; archpriest Maxim Kozlov, chairman of the educational committee of the Russian Orthodox Church and rector of the Saints Cyril and Methodius Post-graduate Institute; archpriest Dionisy Kazantsev, secretary to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia for the Moscow region; archpriest Nikolai Lyschenyuk, deputy chairman of the DECR of the Moscow Patriarchate; archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, deputy chairman of the DECR of the Moscow Patriarchate; archimandrite Theofilakt (Bezukladnikov), vicar abbot of the New Jerusalem Stauropegic Monastery of the Resurrection; Father Vasily Losev, director of legal service of the Moscow metropolitanate; Father Kirill Markovsky, chairman of the Synodal department for prison ministry; the deans of the ecclesiastical districts and other clerics of the city diocese of Moscow.

Also attending the service were representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches to the Moscow Patriarchal Throne: the metropolitan of Philippiopolis Niphon (the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch); the bishop of Remesiana Stefan (the Serbian Orthodox Church); archimandrite Stefan (Dispirakis) (the Greek Orthodox Church of Jerusalem); archimandrite Theoktist (Dimitrov) (the Bulgarian Orthodox Church); archimandrite Seraphim (Shemyatovsky) (the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia); and archpriest Daniel Andrejuk (Orthodox Church in America).

Present at the service were: the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and head of the party in the Russian State Duma, chairman of the Russian State Duma committee for international affairs Leonid Slutsky and first deputy of Russian Railways V. V. Mikhailov.

Praying in the cathedral were the chairman of the Synodal department for relations between Church and society and the media Vladimir Legoida, the abbesses and inmates of convents, clergy from the city of Moscow and the Moscow region, representatives of the Orthodox youth in the capital and numerous faithful.

The hymns for the service were sung by the Patriarchal Choir of Christ the Saviour Cathedral, conducted by choirmaster Ilya Tolkachev.

The TV channel TV Centre broadcast live the Patriarchal service with commentary by professor of the Moscow Theological Academy A. K. Svetozarsky. The service was also broadcast live by Soyuz and Spas and also on the official portal of the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarchia.ru.

According to tradition at Great Vespers the old altar Gospel Book from the times of Empress Catherine Petrovna, which was bequeathed by the ever-memorable metropolitan Pitirim (Nechaev) from the Saint Joseph of Volokolamsk Monastery to the Christ the Saviour Cathedral for especially solemn festive services. The Gospel Book is brought out twice year for Great Vespers for the Nativity of Our Lord and for Paschal Great Vespers.

At the conclusion of Paschal Vespers metropolitan Juvenaly on behalf of the those attending the service and the fullness of the Russian Orthodox Church congratulated His Holiness Patriarch Kirill on the Bright Feast of Pascha. Addressing His Holiness, metropolitan Juvenaly said: "Your Holiness, Most Holy Master and Father. Allow me on behalf of the fullness of our Russian Orthodox Church to congratulate you on the great and salutary feast of Holy Pascha. On this day, perhaps the only day in the year, there is no need to say much, for the entire meaning of the feast is contained only in three words, and allow me to greet you with them: Christ is risen!"

Metropolitan Juvenaly presented His Holiness with a Paschal egg and a bouquet of white roses.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill was congratulated on behalf of the Orthodox youth of the capital by Alexei Vybornov, a participant of the special military operation and holder of the Order of Courage, and Yulia Zherdeva of the mixed choir at the youth department of the Moscow regional diocese. Youth representatives also presented His Holiness with white roses.

The primate of the Russian Orthodox Church delivered a homily to those attending the service.

Then according to tradition the bishops, clergy and laity of the city of Moscow and the Moscow metropolitanate congratulated their ruling bishop.

In the gallery behind the sanctuary of the Christ the Saviour Cathedral His Holiness Patriarch Kirill was also congratulated by the participants of the Patriarchal Volunteers youth movement.

His Holiness, in bidding farewell to the young people, said: "I am glad to see you, my dear ones. I value highly your ministry, I cannot imagine Patriarchal services without your participation, and each one of

you I wish God's aid and bodily strength, and that you will keep your faith in your hearts. And remember that the preservation of faith is not simply a particular view of life when people believe in something or recognize certain truths and so on, but is a matter of life and human happiness. For if it were otherwise, if faith had remained at the level of consciousness and philosophy, there would not have been two thousand years of Christianity. This is life itself – life which the Lord reveals to us. So, in living in this way, according to the law of God, we shape our own well-being. Christ is risen!"

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