



## Panel Discussion "A New World and Christian Civilization" was held at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour



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On October 16, 2025, as part of the XI International Festival of Orthodox Media "Faith and Word," held with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Rus', the festival's first thematic event took place in the Hall of Church Councils of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow – a panel discussion titled "A New World and Christian Civilization."

The participants of the discussion were: Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; V.R. Legoida, Chairman of the Synodal Department for Church-Society and Media Relations; Emir Kusturica, Yugoslav and Serbian film director, composer, writer, actor, and producer; A.I. Denisov, Senator of the Russian Federation, Deputy Chairman of the Federation Council Committee on International Affairs; V.A. Fadeev, public

figure, journalist, Advisor to the President of the Russian Federation, Chairman of the Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights; A.V. Zhuravsky, historian, religious scholar, Deputy Head of the Presidential Directorate for Social Projects; F.A. Lukyanov, international journalist, political scientist, Editor-in-Chief of the journal "Russia in Global Affairs."

The discussion was moderated by I.A. Kuzmenkov, Deputy Chairman of the Synodal Department for Church-Society and Media Relations and Editor-in-Chief of the "Vera" radio station, reports **Patriarchia.ru**, citing the Synodal Department for Church-Society and Media Relations.

As a starting point for the discussion, I.A. Kuzmenkov proposed the idea of values as a boundary between civilizations: "Today, global fault lines run not so much through social and territorial concepts, but through moral challenges – through morality, through society's attitude towards what is commonly referred to as traditional values, and in our understanding – Christian values." In his opinion, "the religious agenda has returned to the top of world politics and, perhaps, to the center of world conflicts."

Responding to a question about transformations in political and cultural discourse, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk drew attention to changes in the discussions at the level of ecumenical institutions, in which the Russian Orthodox Church previously actively participated. According to him, today a significant portion of the issues raised on the platform of the World Council of Churches, regardless of the topic and logic of the discussions, include the idea of supporting sexual deviations as a norm and value of the modern world.

Metropolitan Anthony also noted that clergy and parishioners of the Russian Orthodox Church abroad often face massive ideological pressure, including in the educational sphere, where non-traditional and immoral phenomena are presented to children in textbooks as legitimate practices. In this regard, he drew a disheartening conclusion that, in his opinion, this process will only develop, and the battlefield for human souls will expand.

Continuing the discussion and reflecting on the prospects of modern culture, Emir Kusturica expressed the view that European civilization has lost a historical chance due to its rejection of the religious foundation of culture. Conversely, in Russia, in his opinion, culture is experiencing an upsurge and opening new perspectives thanks to the recognition of Christian values. He noted that cinema and, more broadly, modern culture can have a chance of existence thanks to the universal language of love, hope, and also, for example, iconography – all of this is understandable to audiences in any part of the world: in Serbia, Russia, and Argentina, where diverse audiences received E. Kusturica's films equally positively.

Senator A.I. Denisov, in turn, noted that value discourse is invariably present in international relations.

In his opinion, it is important that the values of the world's peoples are non-contradictory and, through diplomacy, complement each other, leading societies to an understanding of their universal significance and essence.

F.A. Lukyanov supported the discussion, noting: "The modern world is extremely diverse; it does not lend itself to simple linear constructions." In his view, the world is not divided into those who support traditional values and those who, on the contrary, do not support them – this scheme does not fit the context of international relations, where completely different cultures and values exist. He suggested working on an image of the country where the external appearance would be secondary to the real content of the political system: "We should not subordinate ourselves to the desire to be seen well from the outside."

V.R. Legoida spoke about the values of the modern world, noting that from a philosophical point of view, the question of the existence of universal human values has no single solution or is even insoluble, as each culture has its own unique value sets. "One of the paradoxes of the coexistence of representatives of the world's traditional religions with each other is that the axiomatics of world religions, or those religions that were until recently called world religions, are essentially incompatible. But paradoxically, as soon as we move to moral questions and behavioral models, the traditional religions of the world demonstrate amazing similarity. But I emphasize: not in doctrine, not in dogma, but in questions of attitude towards each other. The golden rule of morality is a paradox that continues to nourish the living fabric of human relationships," said the Chairman of the Synodal Department for Church-Society and Media Relations.

A.V. Zhuravsky supported the thesis voiced in the discussion about the confrontation of different worldviews, noting that any international conflicts are connected with the concept of the image of the future, formed in national culture.

F.A. Lukyanov, for his part, noted that moralism in politics has often led to the exploitation of values as a means – as external packaging for political interests or for their crude promotion in other countries.

V.A. Fadeev shared his view on understanding the new world: "When they say 'new world,' they mention unprecedented technological progress, a new information world, a world of social networks, gadgets, and now artificial intelligence. This is not the beginning of a new world; it is the end of the old one. This is, as I call it, the death throes of the old world." Based on the theoretical work of P. Sorokin, the speaker pointed to the exhaustion of the potential of Western civilization, indicators of which include the loss of bearings, the inability to distinguish good from evil, the disintegration of the family as a union between a man and a woman, the atomization of society, etc.

Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk shared his view on the importance of Orthodox journalism as a means of Gospel preaching about love: "The transformation of one person, two people, three people – this leads to the gradual transformation of society, and the more believers there are in society, for whom Christianity is not so much a tribute to belonging to a tradition, to our national cultural code, but when it becomes their way of life, then undoubtedly the whole society will become qualitatively different."

In conclusion, Emir Kusturica shared his thoughts on tradition in the modern cultural community and, in particular, in cinema. In his opinion, the popular culture that emerged in the West in the 70s and its perception as a market led to the destruction of Western culture and the loss of any idea. Conversely, Serbian and Russian cultures focus more on values and deep spiritual needs of the person, about which, for example, F.M. Dostoevsky wrote.

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