



The Postgraduate Institute hosts a presentation of the book "In Defense of Conciliar Structure of the Orthodox Church"



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On November 26, the Ss. Cyril and Methodius Institute for Postgraduate Studies hosted a presentation of the book "In Defense of the Conciliar Structure of the Orthodox Church: a Theory of the Primacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople and its Criticism," authored by hegumen Dionisy (Shyonov), head of the Postgraduate department of the Moscow Theological Academy, director of the Synodal Library of the Russian Orthodox Church named after His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II, member of the Synodal Biblical and Theological Commission, and abbot of St. Andrew's Stavropegic Monastery in Moscow.

Among those attending the presentation were Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations (DECR); Metropolitan Ioanafan (Yeletskikh), member of the Patriarchal Council for Culture; Bishop Serafim of Istra, chairman of the Synodal Department for Youth

Affairs; Archpriest Nikolai Balashov, advisor to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'; Archpriest Valentin Asmus, a senior scholar of Byzantine history and culture; Prof. Alexei Solopov, head of the Department of Classical Philology at the Lomonosov Moscow State University; staff members of the DECR and Institute for Postgraduate Studies, as well as other representatives of the academic community.

Hegumen Dionisy has been writing his book for six years. It was published in October 2025 as a joint project of St. Andrew's Monastery and the Moscow Theological Academy. The book's title reflects its content, which is particularly relevant at a time when Orthodoxy in the world has lost its unity. The most complicated issue about the relationship between conciliarity and primacy has been given an extensive coverage based on the traditional values of Orthodoxy with contemporary problems taken into account.

Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk opened the presentation and noted the importance and relevance of the topics considered in the book. He said that "the book explored the most sensitive issue affecting inter-Orthodox and inter-Christian relations."

While explaining the title of his book, hegumen Dionisy underscored: "The primacy of Constantinople violates the conciliar tradition of the Church, which is the tradition of the Ecumenical Councils, and runs counter to the conciliar spirit of the Church and the principle of catholicity accepted by all."

The story of writing the book and the key problems considered in it were presented. Used in it are books, articles, and online publications by both supporters of the theory of primacy and defenders of conciliar ecclesiology. The materials were regularly systematized and analyzed at St. Andrew's Stavropegic Monastery. The book is divided into seven parts with fourteen chapters. They are:

- I. The Law of the Councils and the Customary Law
- II. The Conciliar Structure of the Orthodox Church and its Distortions
- III. Primacy, Hierarchical Relations among the Primates
- IV. Appeal and Diaspora
- V. Allegations against Russia and the Russian World
- VI. The Anticanonical Creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine
- VII. Opponents and Defenders of Conciliar Ecclesiology in the World of Greek Orthodoxy.

The book was highly appreciated by the church hierarchy, the Patriarchia.ru reports.

Hegumen Dionisy's address was followed by remarks from the participants. Metropolitan Ionafan noted the relevance of the book against the background of the Patriarch of Constantinople's recent statements about judicial authority over the whole world. Constantinople's claims verge on heresy and distort the patristic teaching on the equality of the Persons of the Trinity. Bishop Serafim of Istra mentioned the timeliness of the publication. Archpriest Nikolai Balashov emphasized that the topic taken by the author is well-timed and important for the Church as it concerns all Orthodox Christians. Archpriest Valentin Asmus pointed out that the theory of primacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople discords with the principles of the structure of the Byzantine Empire, where the Emperor rather than a Bishop of Constantinople played an essential leading role in the life of the Church.

The official part being over, the participants and guests continued to exchange views in an informal setting over tea and were presented copies of the new book.

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