



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrates the Divine Liturgy for the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy at the Christ the Saviour Cathedral



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On 1st March on the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' Kirill celebrated the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great and the Office of the Triumph of Orthodoxy at the Christ the Saviour Cathedral.

Upon arriving at the cathedral, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church venerated the precious relics of Saint Philaret of Moscow.

Concelebrating with His Holiness at the Liturgy were: metropolitan Juvenal (Poyarkov); the metropolitan of Krutitsk and Kolomna Paul, the Patriarchal deputy for the Moscow metropolitanate; the metropolitan

of Voskresensk Gregory, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchy and first auxiliary bishop of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' for the city of Moscow; the metropolitan of Volokolamsk Anthony, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate; the metropolitan of Kashira Theognostus, chairman of the Synodal Department for monasteries and the monastic life; the metropolitan of Volgograd and Kamyshin Theodore; the metropolitan of Zvenigorod Arsenius; the archbishop of Podolsk and Lyubertsy Axius, secretary of the episcopal council of the Moscow metropolitanate; the archbishop of Zelenograd Sabbas, deputy chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchy and chairman of the Synodal department for mission; the bishop of Serpukhov Roman; the bishop of Pavlovsky Posad, deputy chairman of the Moscow Patriarchy; the bishop of Istra Seraphim, chairman of the Synodal department for youth affairs; the bishop of Ramenskoye Alexis, personal secretary to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill; the bishop of Yegorievsk Methodius, rector of the Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Humanitarian University and acting chairman of the Synodal bible and theological commission; the bishop of Bronnitsy John; protopresbyter Vladimir Divakov, secretary to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' 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 Rus'; archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), deputy chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate; archpriest Mikhail Potokin, chairman of the Synodal department for church charity and social ministry; Father Kirill Markovsky, chairman of the Synodal department for prison ministry; Father Vasily Losev, director of the secretariat of the World Russian Popular Assembly and director of the legal services of the Moscow metropolitanate; the deans of the ecclesiastical districts of the city of Moscow and clergy from the capital.

Among those concelebrating were representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus': the metropolitan of Philippopolis Niphon (the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch); the bishop of Remesiana Stefan (the Serbian Orthodox Church); archimandrite Seraphim (Shemyatovsky) (the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia); and archpriest Daniel Andrejuk (the Orthodox Church in America).

Attending the Patriarchal service were: the deputy chairman of the Russian State Duma of the Federal Assembly A. Yu. Kuznetsov; the governor of the Volgograd region A. I. Bocharov; the director of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia A. A. Gostev; the director of the Federal Treasury of the Russian Federation R. Ye. Artyukhin; the chairman of the Synodal department for the Church's interaction with society and mass media V. R. Legoida; the first deputy of the Russian ministry of culture S. G. Obryvalin; the first deputy of the director general of the Russian Railways Company V. V. Mikhailov; the deputy head of the Russian presidential administration for social projects A. V. Zhuravsky; the auditor of the Auditing Chamber of the Russian Federation I. N. Kagramanyan; the president of National Endocrinology Research Centre under the Russian health ministry I. I. Dedov; and the deputy head of the World Russian Popular Assembly and chairman of the watch committee of the Russia

Pravoslavnaya public movement M. M. Ivanov.

The liturgical hymns were sung by the Patriarch Choir of the Christ the Saviour Cathedral directed by I. B. Tolkachev.

The Patriarchal service was broadcast live on the Soyuz and Spas TV channels, as well as on the official portal of the Russian Orthodox Church patriarchia.ru.

At the Litany of Fervent Supplication special petitions were offered and the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church read the Prayer for Holy Russia.

The sermon was delivered during the communion of the clergy by Father Yevgeny Dubovets, cleric of the Church of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist in Ivanovskoye in Moscow.

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church celebrated the Office of the Triumph of Orthodoxy.

Then in the Throne Room of the Christ the Saviour Cathedral His Holiness Patriarch Kirill distributed church awards.

For his contribution to the development of medicine and on the occasion of his eighty-fifth birthday the president of the National Endocrinology Research Centre under the Russian health ministry, member of the praesidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences and president of the Russian Association of Endocrinology I. I. Dedov was awarded the Order of Saint Daniel of Moscow, 1st Class.

“Please accept my heartfelt thanks for your work aimed at improving the health of our people. For many long years you have worked in many responsible positions, much has and continues to depend on you, and we see how your work brings results. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. I wish you God’s aid, good health, bodily strength and long years of life for the good of all those you have healed, all those you have helped and all those who love and respect you,” said the His Holiness the Patriarch as he handed him the award.

For his contribution in developing the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia (FPSS) and on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday general of the internal service and the director of the FPSS A. A. Gostev was awarded the Order of Saint Daniel of Moscow, 2nd Class.

In congratulating the director of the FPSS on his award, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said: “I have had

occasion to speak with prisoners, but I was particularly impressed by one occasion that I believe was at Butyrka prison. One man there who was serving a life sentence asked me for a one-on-one personal meeting. I inquired with the prison authorities who told that this was out of the question as you don't understand what sort of individual he is. What if he strangles you? I did finally convince the authorities to let me have this meeting and I shall never forget the man's confession. He told me things that he had never shared with anyone before. About things that had happened in his childhood, about how his cruel way of looking at life was formed, about the terrible crimes he had committed. It was then that I understood how important it was for priests to have access to fallen people such as this."

"Yours is a very important service aimed in the first instance at healing these sick people," added His Holiness the Patriarch. "Each one of them has a sickness that is primarily a moral one. We therefore greatly value your work, and this high ecclesiastical award has been rightly accorded you. It is vital that this system is truly corrective. Of course, it is impossible to dispense with punishment as punishment is part of the process of correction. But if punishment alone is applied without genuine correction, then people become bitter and leave prison worse than when they entered it. We therefore shall continue to cooperate with you, fully understanding the importance of your work. I once again thank you for your service."

For his help in adorning the Church of All Saints on Mamayev Kurgan in Volgograd the governor of the Volgograd region A. I. Bocharev was awarded the Order of Saint Sergius of Radonezh, 2nd Class.

For his contribution to the development of church-state relations and on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday the deputy head of the presidential administration of the Russian Federation for social projects A. V. Zhuravsky was awarded the Order of Saint Sergius of Radonezh, 3rd Class.

Attending the awards ceremony were: the head of the Volgograd metropolitanate the metropolitan of Volgograd and Kamyshin Theodore; the bishop of Ramenskoye Alexis; the chairman of the Synodal department for prison ministry Father Kirill Makovsky; the chairman of the Synodal department for the Church's interaction with society and the mass media V. R. Legoida; and the deputy of the Russian ministry of culture S. G. Obryvalin.

There was then held a reception on the occasion of the feast day. In his speech of greetings the representative of the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' the metropolitan of Philippopolis Niphon said:

"Your Holiness! It is greatly pleasing for us representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches to celebrate the day of the Triumph of Orthodoxy by serving with you. Nowhere in the Orthodox world is this day celebrated so solemnly and so beautifully as in the blessed city of Moscow.

This is a day of victory, of the triumph of the true doctrine over the iconoclasts. How joyous it is that Russia lives by the victory of freedom of religious worship. We cannot but be delighted that forty-thousand Russian churches ring their bells for this feast, their golden cupolas shine with the light of glory and that their prayerful hymns glorify the prototypes of those depicted on Orthodox icons.

An icon-painting school has developed in Russia that has given the world a special spiritual beauty and theology in colours. I am pleased that a small part of the Russia iconographical spiritual legacy is preserved in my museum in the Lebanon, so that Antiochians are able to come into contact with a part of Russian holiness and through it come to know the piety of the Russian people.

Your Holiness, being alongside you on this day of the Church's victory, I would like to emphasize that the millions of people who make up the Russian flock greatly respect your personal contribution to the victory over atheism during the Soviet period so difficult for the Church. Glory be to God that a whole generation has emerged that knows about this persecution only from stories. I am one of the witnesses to your boldness and bravery in the faith that you have inherited from your godly parents and outstanding mentors, a faith which you vindicated when you were rector of the Leningrad Theological Academy.

May the Lord grant you long years of life for the glory of the holy Russian Church. And may the victory of good over evil, of charity over indifference, of truth over falsehood, by which you live, always accompany you in your Primatial ministry. Many Years!"