THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

On Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross, Patriarch Kirill celebrates Liturgy in Cathedral of Christ the Saviour



DECR Communication Service, 15/03/2026

On 15th March 2026, Third Sunday of Lent, of the Veneration of the Holy Cross, commemoration day of the "Reigning" Icon of the Mother of God, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' **celebrated** the Divine Liturgy in the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow.

Upon his arrival at the church, Patriarch Kirill venerated the holy relics of St. Philaret the Metropolitan of Moscow.

Prior to the Liturgy, the miracle-working "Reigning" Icon of the Mother of God, which had undergone restoration, was brought out of the altar to the church ambo. His Holiness delivered a brief homily, in which he spoke of the importance of the icon. After that, it was brought to the middle of the church and

placed on a lectern. Prayers of praise were offered to the Most Holy Theotokos in front of it.

His Holiness officiated at the Divine Liturgy. Among his concelebrants were: Metropolitan Juvenaly (Poyarkov); Metropolitan Pavel of Krutitsy and Kolomna, Patriarchal Vicar for the Moscow Metropolia; Metropolitan Veniamin of Minsk and Zaslavl, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus; Metropolitan Grigory of Voskresensk, Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, Patriarchal First Vicar for the city of Moscow, abbot of the Novospassky Stavropegic Monastery; Metropolitan Nikandr of Vladimir and Suzdal, Chairman of the Financial and Economic Administration of the Moscow Patriarchate; Metropolitan Kirill of Kazan and Tatarstan; Metropolitan Serafim of Baltiysk and Svetlogorsk, Patriarchal Vicar for the Kaliningrad Metropolia; Metropolitan Feodor of Volgograd and Kamyshin; Metropolitan Konstantin of Cairo and North Africa, Patriarch Exarch of Africa; Metropolitan Arseny of Zvenigorod; Metropolitan Yevgeny of Yekaterinburg and Verkhoturye, Chairman of the Synodal Department for Religious Education and Catechization; Archbishop Foma of Odintsovo and Krasnogorsk, Head of the Administrative Secretariat of the Moscow Patriarchate; Archbishop Aksy of Podolsk and Lubertsy; Archbishop Savva of Zelenograd, Deputy Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, Chairman of the Synodal Missionary Department; Bishop Tikhon of Vidnoye, abbot of St. Catherine Stavropegic Monastery; Bishop Roman of Serpukhov, abbot of the Vysotsky Stavropegic Monastery; Bishop Stefan of Kanash and Belovolzhka; Bishop Nikolai of Balashikha and Orekhovo-Zuyevo, Editor-in-Chief of the Publishing House of the Moscow Patriarchate; Bishop Siluan of Pavlovsky Posad, Deputy Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; Bishop Serafim of Istra, First Deputy Chairman of the Publishing Council of the Russian Orthodox Church; Bishop Kirill of Sergiyev Posad and Dmitrov, abbot of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius Lavra, Rector of the Moscow Theological Academy; Bishop Alexy of Ramenskoye, Personal Secretary to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill; Bishop Mefody of Yegoryevsk, Acting Chairman of the Synodal Biblical and Theological Commission, Rector of St. Tikhon's Orthodox University of the Humanities, abbot of St. Nicholas Stavropegic Monastery in Ugresha; Bishop Ioann of Bronnitsy, abbot of the Vysokopetrovsky Stavropegic Monastery; Protopresbyter Vladimir Divakov, Patriarchal Secretary for the city of Moscow; Archpriest Mikhail Ryazantsev, Sacristan of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour; Archpriest Nikolai Balashov, Advisor to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'; Archpriest Maxim Kozlov, Chairman of the Education Committee of the Russian Orthodox Church; Archpriest Igor Vyzhanov, DECR Deputy Chairman; Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR Deputy Chairman; Archpriest Dionisy Kazantsev, Patriarchal Secretary for the Moscow Region; Priest Vasily Losev, head of the Secretariat of the World Russian People's Council, head of the Legal Service of the Moscow Metropolia; as well as abbots of stavropegic monasteries, deans of the Moscow church districts and the Moscow clergy.

Concelebrating with His Holiness were also the following Representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus': Metropolitan Niphon of Philippopolis (Orthodox Church of Antioch), Bishop Stefan of Remesiana (Serbian Orthodox Church), Archimandrite Seraphim (Shemyatovsky) (Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia), and Archpriest Daniel Andrejuk

(Orthodox Church in America).

Among those who attended the Patriarchal Liturgy were Ms A.Yu. Kuznetsova, Deputy Chair of the State Duma of the Russian Federation; Mr I.O. Shchyogolev, Presidential Envoy to the Central Federal District; Mr L.Ye. Slutsky, Leader the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Chairman of the State Duma Committee on International Affairs; Mr S.A. Gavrilov, Chairman of the State Duma Committee on Ownership, Land and Property Relations; Mr R.Ye. Artyukhin, Head of the Federal Treasury; Mr A.G. Yaroshuk, member of the Federation Council; cosmonaut and Hero of Russia Ye.O. Serova; Mr I.N. Kagramanyan, Auditor of the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation; Mr S.G. Obryvalin, First Deputy Minister of Culture; Mr S.G. Malyshev, Senior Vice-President of Nornickel; Mr V.V. Mikhaylov, First Deputy Managing Director of Russian Railways; Mr A.G. Guryev, Vice President of the Russian Union of Chemists; Mr S.V. Khavronyuk, Director of Administrative Department of Nornickel; and Mr Ye.O. Blagov, President of the Russian Cross Charitable Foundation.

Among those in prayerful attendance were also Mr A.V. Shchipkov, Rector of St. John the Theologian Russian Orthodox University, deputy head of the World Russian People's Council; Mr S.Yu. Rudov, deputy head of the World Russian People's Council; Mr M.M. Ivanov, deputy head of the World Russian People's Council, chair of the Supervisory Board of the Orthodox Russia Public Movement.

Liturgical hymns were performed by the Patriarchal Choir of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, conducted by I.B. Tolkachev.

During the Litany of Fervent Supplication, special prayers were said to mark the 50th anniversary of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill's episcopal ordination. The Primate of the Russian Church read out the Prayer for the Holy Rus'.

Prior to the communion, Bishop Siluan of Pavlovsky Posad delivered a sermon.

After the Liturgy, Many Years were sung to the Primate of the Russian Church.

Metropolitan Grigory of Voskresensk read out the **Congratulatory Address** from the Holy Synod members on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of His Holiness' episcopal ordination and presented to Patriarch Kirill an old icon of the Holy Prophet Elijah.

Mr I. O. Shchyogolev read out a message of greetings from Russian President Vladimir Putin.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill delivered a homily, in which he focused, among other topics, on the importance of the appearance of the "Reigning" Icon of the Mother of God in 1917. His Holiness said, in

particular:

"It is a great shrine. In the most terrible revolutionary times it was associated with our people's hopes. As the tsar was stripped of his power and the throne became empty, the "Reigning" Icon of the Mother of God appeared, as if ascending the throne of the all-Russian monarchs and showing that the throne was not empty, but that making up for the secular power which had been overthrown was the spiritual power emanating, first and for most, from the Protecting Veil of the Most Holy Theotokos.

"It is important that we, while being inspired by these thoughts, be also mindful of the great responsibility lying today on the Russian Orthodox Church, not only for the welfare of our churches and celebration of divine services but, if I may say so, for the future of our people. And if we perform our ministry, conscious of how great its scale is, then today's generation of the clergy and laity may really withstand the threats, if, God forbid, life in our country changes somehow, which, regrettably, the Church and Orthodox people in the past failed to resist.

"So, when you come to venerate the "Reigning" Icon of the Mother of God, please pray, among other things, for our country, our Orthodox President, for the authorities and the army, for our Church and the clergy. The Heavenly Queen hears our prayers and responds to them. I extend my festive greetings to all of you!"

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a reception. Among those who greeted His Holiness Patriarch Kirill on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his episcopal ordination was Metropolitan Niphon of Philippopolis, Representative of the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'. His Eminence said, in particular:

"Today we look back at the events of March 14, 1976, when the bells in the Holy Trinity and St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra were chiming, hailing an outstanding Orthodox hierarch – Metropolitan Nikodim – who arrived there in order to perform, in concelebration with other hierarchs, including Metropolitan Juvenaly who is present here, the episcopal consecration of his spiritual son, Archimandrite Kirill, as Bishop of Vyborg.

"All those present in the church turned their eyes to young Bishop Kirill, waiting for what he was going to say at that important moment in his life.

"How beautiful his words were! He spoke about the importance and loftiness of episcopal ministry as primacy in prayer and love, in service and responsibility. He said that manifested in conciliar episcopal service is the invisible ecumenical unity of the Church; that archpastoral ministry should bear the fruit of

the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness (Gal 5:22), and that it requires selflessness, because a bishop fully belongs to the Church, and from then on, his joy, sorrow and life is the joy, sorrow and life of the people entrusted to him.

“Your Holiness, for half a century, you have been worthily serving first as bishop, then as archbishop and metropolitan and finally as Primate of the Russian Church. Often, you had to make important, difficult and crucial decisions. Your brave uncompromising voice was heard at the time when others kept silence. Your books have been translated into many languages; your participation in international conferences elevated the role of the Russian Church in history.

“You did much for the Church in the times of hardships, relying on your strong faith and acting in accordance with St. Paul’s words: I can do all things in him who strengthens me (Phil 4:13).

“Your Holiness, we, Representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches who live under you omophorion, strive to imitate your faithfulness to the Church and your service to the people. Today, congratulating you on your golden episcopal jubilee, we pray that our Lord may give you strength and good health, as well as His abundant grace for your further service to the Russian Church and the entire Orthodoxy.

“Many years to Your Holiness!”

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/94092/