DECR Chairman Addresses the Plenary Session “The Family as a Traditional Spiritual and Moral Value” at Saint Petersburg State University.



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On June 23, 2026, as part of the strategic session “The Worldview Content of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values as the Foundation of the Unity of the Peoples of Russia,” a plenary meeting entitled “The Family as a Traditional Spiritual and Moral Value” was held at Saint Petersburg State University.

The event was organized by Saint Petersburg State University with the support of the Scientific and Educational Theological Association and the Center for Spiritual and Moral Education and Theology of the Russian Academy of Education.

The meeting was attended by figures from the fields of culture and education, scholars, clergy,

theologians, representatives of traditional religions, and university lecturers.

The session was moderated by D.V. Shmonin, Director of the Institute of Theology of Saint Petersburg State University.

Addresses and greetings were delivered by A.S. Yarmosh, First Vice-Rector for Strategic Development and Partnership of Saint Petersburg State University; A.V. Tretyakov, Executive Secretary of the Council for Cooperation with Religious Associations under the President of the Russian Federation; O.V. Petrova, Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation; A.V. Shchipkov, Deputy Head of the World Russian People's Council; Mufti R.D. Pancheev, Chairman of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Saint Petersburg and the Northwestern Region of Russia; O.Yu. Goncharov, member of the Council for Cooperation with Religious Associations under the President of Russia; Rabbi A.Yu. Gurevich, Head of the Department for Cooperation with Law Enforcement Institutions of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia; as well as invited experts.

Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, addressed the participants of the plenary session.

Noting that the contemporary world is experiencing a profound crisis of values, Metropolitan Anthony highlighted the weakening of the institution of the family as one of the most alarming trends. "The Russian Orthodox Church consistently bears witness to the fact that the development of humanity is impossible without a solid moral foundation and reliance on traditional values, which are neither relics of the past nor obstacles to progress," the archpastor emphasized. "On the contrary, they create the conditions for the harmonious development of the individual, the strengthening of morality, and the preservation of the cultural diversity of peoples."

Among those participating in the session were also Archpriest Nikolai Balashov, Adviser to His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'; Archpriest Sergiy Zvonarev, Secretary for the Affairs of the Far Abroad of the Department for External Church Relations; and Priest Nikolai Vasin, Secretary to the Chairman of the DECR.

Following the event, a tour of the historic building of Saint Petersburg State University was organized for the DECR delegation, with the participation of S.V. Andryushin, Vice-Rector for International Affairs of the University.

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