



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

Welcoming Address by the Chairman of the DECR at the Plenary Session “The Family as a Traditional Spiritual and Moral Value”



DECR Communication service, 23.06.2026.

On June 23, 2026, the Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, spoke at Saint Petersburg State University at the plenary session “The Family as a Traditional Spiritual and Moral Value,” which took place as part of the strategic session “The Worldview Content of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values as the Basis for the Unity of the Peoples of Russia.”

Dear organizers, participants, and guests of the meeting!

I cordially greet all those gathered at the plenary session “The Family as a Traditional Spiritual and Moral Value,” which is taking place as part of the strategic session “The Worldview Content of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values as the Basis for the Unity of the Peoples of Russia.”

The modern world is experiencing a profound crisis of values. It manifests itself especially in Western countries, where over the past decades traditional ideas about man, family, and marriage, and moral responsibility have been consistently eroded. With alarm, we observe trends toward revising the foundations of public life that for many centuries were formed by Christian faith and worldview, ensured the continuity of generations, the stability of social institutions, and the preservation of the cultural identity of peoples.

Today, before our eyes, the institution of the family is being weakened through the spread of a purely mundane, egoistic view of life, the rejection of family obligations and childbearing, as well as attempts to destroy the foundation of marriage as a union of a man and a woman. However, in Western society there are people who strive to remain faithful to Christian moral convictions and to defend the right to live in accordance with evangelical ideals.

In recent years, we have observed an increase in the number of residents of European countries who decide to move to Russia, a country where spiritual values are protected, where one need not fear that their children will be imposed with gender ideology, where faith is freely professed and the traditional understanding of the family is adhered to.

In this regard, of special significance is the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 809 “On the Approval of the Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values.” This document not only records the system of value guidelines historically formed in domestic culture, but also emphasizes the importance of life, human dignity, a strong family, creative labor, service to the Fatherland, the memory of the people, and the continuity of generations as the most important foundations of the unity of society.

The Russian Orthodox Church invariably testifies that the development of humanity is impossible without a solid moral foundation and reliance on traditional values, which are not a relic of the past or an obstacle to progress. On the contrary, they create conditions for the harmonious development of the individual, the strengthening of morality, and the preservation of the cultural diversity of peoples.

The high purpose of the institution of family and marriage occupies a special place in the general church documents. In the “Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church,” the “Basis of the Teaching of the Russian Orthodox Church on Dignity, Freedom, and Human Rights,” and the document “On the Canonical Aspects of Church Marriage,” the understanding of the family as a small church, founded on faith and fidelity, mutual love, and the responsibility of the spouses, is consistently revealed. The Church invariably emphasizes that a strong marital union of a man and a woman serves to preserve the moral health of society, the upbringing of the younger generation, and the transmission of the experience of the ancestors.

Today, throughout the world, the consolidation of all constructive forces that share adherence to traditional spiritual and moral values is especially in demand. This refers to the establishment of cooperation between the leadership of various countries and international institutions, religious communities, the scientific and expert community, and the mass media in the sphere of protecting the rights of the family. Only through joint efforts can a worthy response be given to the challenges of the time and the preservation of spiritual heritage for future generations of people be ensured.

I wish all those gathered God's help in the forthcoming work, substantive discussions, and mutual understanding.

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