His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrates the Divine Liturgy at Christ the Saviour Cathedral for the feast of the Synaxis of the Saints of Moscow

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On 6th September on the fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost, the feast of the translation of the relics of Saint Peter of Moscow, Kiev and All Russia, the feast of the Synaxis of the Saints of Moscow and on the day of special prayers for God's creation, His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow.

On the Sunday before 26th August the Synaxis of the Saints of Moscow is celebrated annually. The feast was instituted by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church in 1997. Also, on 13th July 2015 the Holy Synod laid down that each year special prayers are to be offered for God's creation on the first

Sunday of September (the first Sunday after the 18th August according to the Old Calendar).

Upon arrival at the Christ the Saviour Cathedral the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church venerated the miracle-working copy of the Smolensk icon of Our Lady, the miracle-working Vladimir icon of Our Lady and the relics of Saint Peter, Metropolitan of Moscow.

The miracle-working copy of the Smolensk icon of Our Lady dates back to the eighteenth century and on the eve was brought from the Dormition Cathedral in Smolensk. The icon has become one of the most important holy objects of the Moscow Procession of the Cross.

Upon vesting, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill met the reliquary with the particle of the relics of the Holy Right-believing Prince Dimitry Donskoy. The reliquary had been brought from the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael in the Moscow Kremlin. Accompanying the reliquary was the chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchy and the metropolitan of Voskresensk Gregory.

Concelebrating at the Divine Liturgy with His Holiness were: the metropolitan of Krutitsk and Kolomna Paul, the Patriarchal auxiliary bishop for the metropolitanate of Moscow and vicar abbot of the New Saviour stauropegic monastery of Moscow; the metropolitan of Volokolamsk Anthony, the chairman of the Department for External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate; the metropolitan of Smolensk and Dorogobuzh Isidore; the metropolitan of Zvenigorod Arsenius; the archbishop of Odintsovo and Krasnogorsk Thomas, head of the administrative secretariat of the Moscow Patriarchy and dean of the Epiphany Cathedral in Yelokhovo, Moscow; the archbishop of Podolsk and Lyubertsy Axius; the archbishop of Zelenograd Sabbas, chairman of the Synodal department for mission, deputy chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchy; the bishop of Serpukhov Roman, vicar abbot of the Vysotsky stauropegic monastery; the bishop of Vidno Tikhon, the vicar abbot of Saint Catherine's stauropegic monastery; the bishop of Pavlovo-Posad Silvanus, deputy chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchy; the bishop of Istra Seraphim, the first deputy chairman of the Publishing Council of the Moscow Patriarchy; the bishop of Sergiev-Posad and Dmitrov Cyril, vicar abbot of the Monastery of the Holy Trinity and Saint Sergius, rector of the Moscow Theological Academy; the bishop of Ramenskoye Alexis, personal secretary to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill; the bishop of Yegorievsk Methodius, rector of the Saint Tikhon Orthodox Humanitarian University, vicar abbot of the Saint Nicholas monastery in Ugresha; archpriest Mikhail Ryazantsev, sacristan of the Christ the Saviour Cathedral; archpriest Dionisy Kazantsev, secretary to His Holiness the Patriarch for the region of Moscow; archpriest Vasiliy Movchanyuk, dean of the Yartsevo region of the diocese of Smolensk; Father Vasily Losev; head of the secretariat of the World Russian Peoples' Council, head of the legal service of the Moscow metropolitanate; and clergy from the city of Moscow.

The liturgical hymns were sung by the Patriarchal Choir of the Christ the Saviour Cathedral conducted

by Ilya Tolkachev.

His Holiness the Patriarch celebrated the service with a copy of the Primatial staff of metropolitan Peter which is kept in the Armoury of the Moscow Kremlin.

The Patriarchal service was attended by: the plenipotentiary representative of the Russian president in the central federal district I. O. Schegolev; the Russian minister for trade and industry A. A. Alikhanov; the deputy chairman of the Russian State Duma A. Yu. Kuznetsova; the chairman of the Liberal Democrat Party of Russia, head of the Liberal Democrat parliamentary group in the Russian State Duma and chairman of State Duma Committee for International Affairs Leonid Slutsky; chairman of the Synodal department for relations between the Church and society V. P. Legoida; chairman of the Russian State Duma committee for property and land issues S. A. Gavrilov; the first deputy chairman of the Russian Federation Council for the budget and financing A. V. Shenderyuk-Zhidkov; Hero of Russia pilot and cosmonaut Ye. O. Serova; the auditor of the Russian Auditing Chamber I. N. Kagramanyan; the first deputy director general of the Russian Railway Company V.V. Mikhailov; deputy head of the World Russian Peoples' Council and rector of the Saint John the Theologian Russian Orthodox University A. V. Schipkov; deputy head of the World Russian Peoples' Council and chairman of the oversight committee of the Orthodox Russia Public Movement M. M. Ivanov; the director general of the Spas TV channel B. V. Korchevnikov; the first vice-president and financial director of Norilsk Nickel S. G. Malyshev; and the editor-in-chief of the Russia-24 TV channel Ye. V. Bekasov, as well as other guests.

Praying in the cathedral were the abbesses and inmates of Moscow convents, military personnel and participants of the Time of Heroes programme, Cossacks from the All-Russian Cossack Society and the Central Cossack Military Unit and many faithful.

The Patriarchal service was broadcast live on the Soyuz and Spas TV channels, as well as on the official website of the Russian Orthodox Church patriarchia.ru. The broadcast was also made available on large screens erected outside the Christ the Saviour Cathedral.

Special prayers were offered up at the litany of fervent supplication and the Primate of the Russian Church read the prayer for Holy Russia.

The homily before communion was delivered by archpriest Vladimir Novitsky, rector of the Church of Saint Nicholas at Solomennaya Storozhki in Moscow.

After holy communion His Holiness Patriarch Kirill also delivered a homily to the flock on the commencement of the Moscow Procession of the Cross.

“Dear bishops, fathers, brothers and sisters, I greet you all and express my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the feast day of Saint Peter of Moscow.

On this day we have gathered especially in order to remember Saint Peter of Moscow and glorify all the saints who have shone forth in the Land of Moscow.

We will soon embark on the Procession of the Cross, a remarkable tradition. Today we are making yet one more contribution to ensure that our prayer to all the saints who have shone forth in the Land of Moscow and to Saint Peter should become the legacy of future generations.

In order to do so, we need to preserve the Orthodox faith, teach our children how to pray in church and participate in processions of the cross. We should not spare our children. What I mean is that we should spare our children, but with one exception, which is that of prayer.

I would like to recall something from my own childhood. People also tried to protect me. I liked it when I was taken to church, especially to attend akathists to Saint Nicholas, which were sung in the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral of what was then Leningrad. A lot of people had gathered. But apparently my parents did not like to take me with them as the service was long and a child might get tired. As I now recall my conversation with my parents, I will cite it word for word: ‘A child is asking you to take him with you to church. Not to the theatre or the market, but to church. And you won’t let him!’ After these words my mother said: ‘Get dressed.’ And after this my parents never stopped me from participating in processions of the cross.

So, there is my reminiscence from my childhood. It was not an easy childhood. We lived in an atheist country, and of course all of these events, including processions of the cross, were then a testimony to the faith that had been preserved in our people and in our country.

And today without hindrance and with the support of the authorities who guarantee our safety at the procession of the cross all of this is accomplished with dignity and with a huge number of people coming together.

I would like once more to congratulate you all on this event and wish that processions of the cross in the land of Russia, in the city of Moscow, should never cease, that they remain a visible testimony to the Orthodox faith in our people. And that through the prayers of Saint Peter of Moscow the Lord may preserve the Orthodox faith in our people and that this faith be passed on from generation to generation. Amen.

I congratulate you all on the feast day.”

At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy a short prayer service of glorification was offered to the Synaxis of the Saints of Moscow, after which the Primate of the Russian Church headed the Moscow Procession of the Cross.

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