



**THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Department for External Church Relations

## **On the Day of Uncovering of the Relics of St. Sergius of Radonezh, Primates of Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches celebrate Divine Liturgy in Cathedral Square in the St. Sergius Laura of the Trinity**







On July 18, 2013, the Day of the Uncovering of the Relics of St. Sergius the Abbot of Radonezh, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the square at the Cathedral of the Assumption in the St. Sergius Monastery of the Trinity, where a tented altar was installed.

It was for the first time in the history of the Laura that the liturgy was celebrated in the cathedral square.

The primates of the Russian and Serbian Churches were assisted by a great assembly of bishops, priests and monks in holy order, among them Metropolitan Amfilohie of Montenegro and the Seaside, Bishop Longin of Central and Western America, Bishops Irinej of Bac, Bishop Teodosije of Raska-Prizren and other members of the official delegation of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The service was attended, among others, by A. Beglov, presidential envoy for the Russian Federation Central Region, S. Stepashin, chairman of the Russian Federation Audit Chamber and chairman of the Imperial Orthodox Palestinian Society, Yu. Chaika, Prosecutor General of Russia, O. Rozhnov, as well as Moscow regional officials and participants of the 6<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the Fellowship of Orthodox Youth.

During the Lesser Entrance, Patriarch Kirill elevated Archbishop Yevlogy of Vladimir and Suzdal to the rank of metropolitan in connection with the establishment of the Metropolitanate of Vladimir, and Hieromonk Antony (Sevryuk) to the rank of archimandrite in connection with his appointment as administrative secretary of the Moscow Patriarchate's parishes in Italy.

After the liturgy the two patriarchs celebrated a thanksgiving at the venerated Icon of St. Sergius of Radonezh in the cathedral square.

The Divine Liturgy was also celebrated in the monastery's Church of the Trinity, the Refectory Church, the Church of the Holy Spirit, the Church of the Protecting Veil in the Theological Academy and the Church of St. John the Climacus.

After the thanksgiving, Patriarch Kirill greeted Patriarch Irinej, who said in response that it was a special honour for him to be invited to the Day of St. Sergius, one of the central feasts of the Russian Church.

'St. Sergius was fearful for all enemies, both invisible, who tried to escape the prayers he lifted up in solitude, and visible whom he drove away from the Russian land by the blessing he gave to the Prince Dimitry Donskoy. As the father of the Russian land, he deserves such veneration as no other saint does...

'It is very good that here, in the Laura of St. Sergius, there are students from our Serbian Church. Only here can they receive a unique experience of life in the full-flowing and powerful Church which cherishes the long-standing order and traditions inherent in our Slavic world, while European countries become ever more godless. A while longer and Orthodoxy will have not to live but survive there'.

Patriarch Kirill addressed numerous pilgrims, speaking from the balcony of the patriarchal chambers, saying in particular,

'I am delighted to see you in such a great number. When we pray together in the Saint's Laura, we become stronger. Each becomes stronger feeling the support coming from the prayers of those standing at his or her side. The more we are standing side by side around God's altar the stronger we are spiritually. That is why the soul of an Orthodox Christian is so longing for pilgrimage, for participation in important celebrations, because they unite the Church around the Body and Blood of Christ. These celebrations offer a great opportunity to be part of our common life.

'From my heart I wish that you may keep the Orthodox faith, that you may be courageous and capable of motivating your actions in private, family and public life by your faith, by your faithfulness to Christ'.

In the Chapel of St. Philaret the Merciful at the patriarchal chambers, His Holiness Kirill presented high church award. Prosecutor General Yu. Chaika was invested with the Order of St. Sergius of Radonezh, Degree I, for his long-standing support of the St. Sergius Laura as the first chairman of the Laura's patrons board. Mr. E. Pozdyshev, general director of Concern Rosenergroatom, was awarded the Order of St. Sergius of Radonezh, Degree I, for this long-standing support of the Laura and on the occasion of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday.

During the fraternal repast, Bishop Zinovy of Elista and Kalmykia was awarded the Order of St. Sergius of Radonezh, Degree II, in acknowledgement of his zealous archpastoral work and on the occasion of the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination and 65<sup>th</sup> birthday.

*Patriarchal Press Service*

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