



Patriarch Kirill opens a plenary session of the ROC Inter-Council Presence

The plenary session began with the singing of prayer led by Archpriest Vladimir Divakov, patriarchal secretary for Moscow.

The presidium of the meeting included Metropolitan Juvenaly of Krutitsy and Kolomna, Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and All Moldova; Metropolitan Varsonofiy, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Zaslavsk, Patriarchal Exarch for All Belarus; and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill addressed himself to the members of the Inter-Council Presence with introductory remarks and announced the following agenda:

1. Discussion on the report of His Holiness. Considering the advisability of restructuring the Inter-Council Presence and possible subjects for discussions in its work bodies.
2. Considering a Draft Provision for Monasteries and Monastics. Speaker – Metropolitan George of Nizhniy Novgorod and Arzamas.
3. Considering a draft document on Canonical Aspects of the Church Marriage. Speaker – Alexander Zadornov, secretary of the Canon Law Commission and pro-rector of Moscow Theological Academy.

Before the discussion on these issues, Patriarch Kirill and the session members considered a number of proposals for themes to be taken up by the Inter-Council Presence.

The Inter-Council Presence is an advisory body of the Moscow Patriarchate working in periods between Local and Bishops' Councils with the task to prepare decisions concerning major matters of internal life and external work of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Inter-Council Presence's terms of reference include theology, church governance, canon law, liturgy, pastoral work, mission, theological education, religious enlightenment, the Church's relations with society and state as well as other confessions and religions.

The agenda of the Inter-Council Presence is determined by a Local or a Bishops' Council, the Holy Synod, and Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

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