



## **Social service and good works are an important and organic extension of the Liturgy - Patriarch Kirill**

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I send heartfelt greetings to all the organizers, guests and participants of the 13th All-Diaspora Russian Orthodox Youth Council being held in San Francisco.

This forum is dedicated to two important themes for the Church: missionary work and social service. The witness of our faith has immense meaning for millions of people, many of whom, unfortunately, are losing traditional moral orientation. Such witness is especially convincing and more powerful the more we bolster it with our good deeds, real acts of love and mercy, care for those who are in need of our attention and aid. Social service and good works are an important and organic extension of the Liturgy—the “common work” towards which every Christian is called. It is specifically love for one’s neighbor that is a criteria for active faith of man, for in the words of Apostle James, for “faith without works is dead” (James 2:26).

Symbolically, this conference is being held during the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the glorification of St John of Shanghai and San Francisco, who showed a remarkable example throughout his own life of kindness, selflessness, sensitivity and responsiveness to the pain and troubles of others. Wherever there was suffering, he was there. He readily reacted to human sorrows and brought forth the light of the love of Christ to those who were burdened by many sorrows.

I hope that the forum opening today will enable young people to unite in their striving to work towards the glory of God and the benefit of their neighbor, emulating the works of St John of Shanghai.

Invoking the blessing of the Merciful Lord and Savior, I wish you firm health and help from above in all your good works.

+KIRILL,  
PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA