

Patriarch Alexei II prayerfully commemorated on 10th anniversary of his repose



His Holiness Patriarch Alexei II, of blessed memory, the 15th primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, was solemnly commemorated yesterday on the 10th anniversary of his repose.

A litia for the repose of his predecessor's soul was served by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia at the former's tomb in the Annunciation Chapel of the Theophany Cathedral in Moscow, reports the site of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Pat. Kirill was concelebrated by 14 other hierarchs, including His Eminence Metropolitan Niphon of Philippopolis, the representative of the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East to the Patriarch of Moscow, and a number of clergy, including Archpriest Daniel Andrejuk, the rector of the St. Catherine's Orthodox Church in America representation church in Moscow.

A number of monastics and faithful laity also joined in the prayers, including a

delegation from the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, as Pat. Alexei was an Estonian and began his ecclesiastical career there.

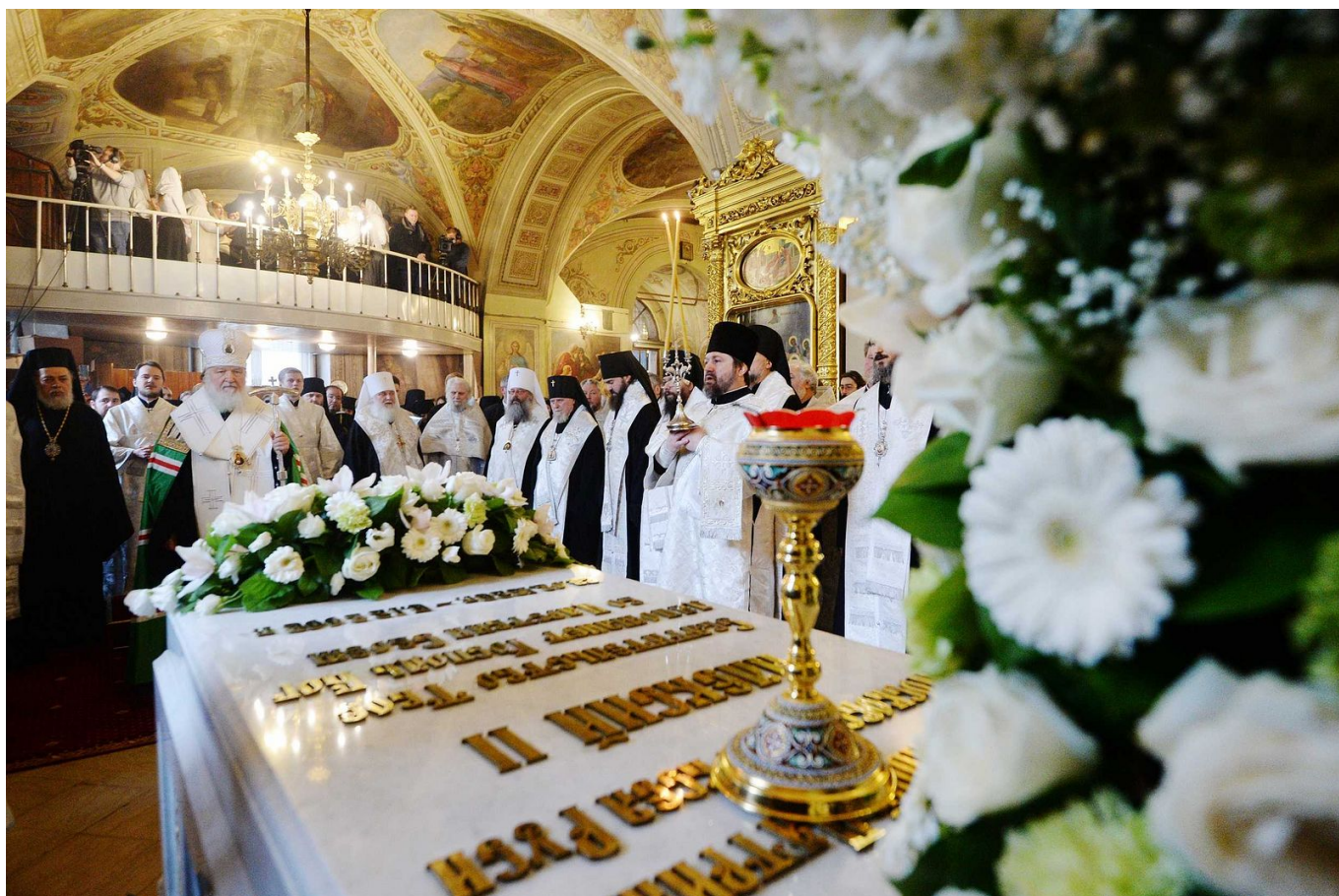
Before the beginning of the service, Pat. Kirill addressed those gathered in the church with words recalling Pat. Alexei's many years of service to God in His Church.

Noting that Pat. Alexei led the Church during the fall of the Soviet Union, in a time of new possibilities, he stated: "His Holiness the Patriarch led this remarkable renewal of our Church life in the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s. These years were marked by the opening of many churches, the ordination of many clergy, but most importantly, these years were marked by a change in the Church's position in our country. The foundation for its further development was laid, and His Holiness Patriarch Alexei was directly involved in all of this, leading the Church life."

However, as Pat. Kirill notes, not all was calm and peaceful, as schisms broke out in Ukraine that persist to this day.

"All of this could not pass by the consciousness and heart of our reposed Patriarch. And I, his closest employee [as the head of the Department for External Church Relations—OC], well remember how His Holiness experienced what was happening in the Church, but never lost hope, never lost peace, and this hope and peace inspired us all."

"We remember His Holiness Patriarch Alexei as a man who knew how to forgive, how to listen to people, and how to restrain even sometimes righteous anger. We remember His Holiness the Patriarch as a man who treated the sorrows of others with an open heart when they would confide their sorrows to him," Pat. Kirill also reflected.



Pat. Kirill then served the memorial prayers, after which he laid flowers on Pat. Alexei's tomb. Such services were also served at all Patriarchal residences in and around Moscow.

His Holiness Patriarch Alexei II was born on February 23, 1929 in Tallinn, Estonia to a deeply believing family. He served in the Church from early childhood, and as an episcopal subdeacon from the age of 15.

He graduated from the St. Petersburg Seminary in 1949 and was ordained as a deacon on April 15, 1950, and as a priest two days later, being appointed the rector of the Theophany Church in Jõhvi, Estonia.

He graduated from the theological academy in 1953 and was awarded the degree of candidate of theology for his thesis "Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov) of Moscow as a Dogmatician."

He took his monastic vows on March 3, 1961 at the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra and was elevated to the rank of archimandrite on August 21. On September 3, he was consecrated as the bishop of Tallinn and All Estonia. He was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan in 1968.

In 1986, he was appointed as the Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod, and it was during this time that St. Xenia of St. Petersburg was canonized and churches and monasteries and relics began to be returned to the Church.

He was elected as Patriarch on June 7, 1990 and enthroned on June 10 in the Theophany Cathedral where he is now buried. He reposed in the Lord on December 5, 2008 in his residence outside Moscow.

