

RUSSIAN CHURCH LAUNCHES NATIONAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE HOTLINE



A new national information line for Church social assistance was launched by the Russian Church's Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Service yesterday.

The hotline began its work on the 12th anniversary of the enthronement of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill as the primate of the Russian Church.

Hotline operators are taking calls 24-7, and calls are free throughout Russia for all who are seeking spiritual support and food assistance. Callers can request a priest to celebrate the Sacraments, and operators will also provide information about possible assistance from Church social projects, such as women's shelters, drug rehabilitation centers, homeless shelters, nursing homes, and more, reports Patriarchia.ru.

The Russian Church operates 4,500 social projects and institutions, more than 300 chapters of Sisters of Mercy, 77 women's shelters, 211 humanitarian aid centers,

more than 60 nursing homes for the ill, more than 90 homeless shelters, more than 300 projects for drug addicts, and more than 800 volunteer services and charity groups.

Various diocesan hotlines appeared throughout the pandemic, His Grace Bishop Panteleimon of Orekhovo-Zuevsky, the chairman of the Synodal Department for Charity, explained, but now the Church has coordinated its efforts to operate a single national hotline.

“The epidemic has shown how in-demand the Church’s help is. Churches and church social projects are receiving many requests for help. We try to help everyone,” Vladyka said.

The national hotline is an extension of the Moscow hotline of the Orthodox Mercy service, which has taken more than 34,000 calls since April 2020.

Food aid to the needy is organized in the dioceses. Since June 2020, the Synodal Department for Charity has allocated more than \$245,000 (18.6 million rubles) for the purchase of food packages for 45,000 families in need in 58 dioceses in Russia, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, East Timor, and the Philippines. Packages weigh more than 22 lbs. and contain stewed meat, canned food, condensed milk, sugar, salt, cereals, pasta, cookies, and butter.

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