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PATRIARCH KIRILL REFLECTS ON 45 YEARS OF EPISCOPAL MINISTRY



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia celebrated the Divine Liturgy for Forgiveness Sunday/The Sunday of the Expulsion of Adam from Paradise at Moscow's Christ the Savior Cathedral yesterday. It also marked the 45th anniversary of his hierarchical ministry.

At the end of the service, the Patriarch addressed the congregation with a primatial word, published on the site of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Thanking everyone for their congratulations on his anniversary, His Holiness emphasized that such kind words help him in difficult times and help him to remember to rely on the help of God rather than his own strength.

The apostle Paul's words: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phil. 4:13), are filled with this Divine truth, the Patriarch noted. Man is naturally capable of a great deal, but it is only when our nature is inspired by Divine grace and power that we can do all things.

Pat. Kirill has experienced this truth himself throughout his life and his 45 years of episcopal ministry, he said. He recalled living through the terrible years for the Church of the Khrushchev persecutions, who declared that he would show the last priest on TV, because under communism there is no room for faith. However, the Church and the faith remained.

And while the years of his episcopal ministry did not coincide with the years of bloody persecution, they were nevertheless difficult years, His Holiness emphasized, when it was necessary to fight for everything. And while conditions today are completely different, the Church must remember the times of persecution, "because from memory grows experience, and from experience—wisdom."

Thus, Pat. Kirill's memory of his consecration to the episcopacy is forever combined "with the memory of all that was associated with the preservation and strengthening of the Orthodox faith in the life of our people."

The Patriarch then thanked all his relatives and mentors who have shaped him, including his grandfather who was a confessor against the schism of renovationism, and his parents who raised all their children in deep faith.

He especially recalled his spiritual mentor Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov) of Leningrad "who not only did a great deal to strengthen my faith and my desire to serve the Church, but also made a lot of efforts to ensure that this ministry was aimed at consistently establishing faith in the hearts of our people."

Met. Nikodim is unfairly slandered believes Pat. Kirill, who is certain that Met. Nikodim today prays for him before the throne of the Lord.

In conclusion, His Holiness also thanked his brother bishops, the clergy, and the people, who pray for him, and offered a sober warning:

I would like to say that the times in which we live, outwardly prosperous, are also full of many dangers, and it's necessary to have a sufficiently sharp spiritual vision to see the dangers that occur not so much in our country as in the whole world. It is quite obvious that faith in the Lord and Savior is really a barrier to the coming of

the Antichrist, to the coming of the last times associated with the rule of evil. Therefore, all those who fight to defend the faith, to defend God’s truth, enter the battlefield with the dark forces of evil. But the Lord teaches us not to be afraid of our hearts, so that we, trusting in His help, in His good and perfect will, and strengthened by faith, do what we must do as Orthodox Christians, both in our personal and public lives. And as long as this is the case, the Lord will certainly incline His mercy to our Church and to our people.

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