

HIS BEATITUDE RECEIVES THE “PATRIARCH ALEXIOS II” AWARD

On the afternoon of 21st January 2012, in the function hall of the Holy Church of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, the function of the awarding of the “Patriarch Alexios II” award by the International Institute for the Unity of Orthodox Nations of the Russian Church took place. Honoured recipients for the past year 2011 were His Beatitude Theodoros II Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa and His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Independent Palestinian Authority.

Arriving at the Holy Church of Christ the Saviour accompanied by His Eminence Athanasios Metropolitan of Cyrene and Exarch of the Patriarchate of Alexandria in Moscow and the Very Reverend Archimandrite Panteleimon Arathymos Chief-Secretary of the Holy Synod, His Beatitude had a private meeting with His Beatitude Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and with His Excellency President Mahmoud Abbas. The award ceremony then took place.

The opening was declared by Professor Dr. Alexeev Valery Arkadevich, President of the International Institute for the Unity of Orthodox Nations who presented the history of the establishment of the above-mentioned award, and His Beatitude Patriarch Kirill of Moscow spoke about the honoured recipients. Speaking of His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, he emphasized that he is being honoured “for his exceptional contribution to the consolidation of unity among Orthodox Nations and the strengthening and promotion of Christian values in global society, as well as his contribution to the tightening of inter-Orthodox relations”.

His Beatitude Kirill and Dr Alexeev Valery awarded the

distinction to His Beatitude. During his address His beatitude the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria said among other things:

“It is an exceptional honour that is awarded to the ancient Apostolic and Patriarchal Throne of Alexandria, in the person of its Pope and Patriarch by the International Institute for the Unity of Orthodox Nations of our sister Church of Russia. We are certain that this honourable distinction echoes the fraternal relations of wholehearted love in Christ and co-operation between us to the glory of God. We are also sure that it demonstrates the complete recognition of the contribution of the Throne of St Mark to the formation of Christian theology and thought and its recent missionary activity towards the evangelization of the blessed African Continent...

It is therefore understood that the unity of the Orthodox nations, must not be only thought of in words. It is imperative that it have an essential meaning too. Our unity is based on the foundation of faith, who is our one Lord Jesus Christ, whose Holy Body is broken but not divided. The unity of the One, Catholic, and Apostolic Church is supported on the divine and holy canons, on which the Ecumenical Synods were based and on the traditions formed through the centuries as well as the steadfast order of Orthodoxy. The unity of the various local Orthodox Churches is achieved in the sacraments through the commemoration in the diptychs of their Heads during the sanctification of the bread and wine into the Holy Body and Precious Blood of Christ in the Common Cup. In the constitution of the holy unity of Orthodoxy the sister Churches of Alexandria and Russia have written constituent chapters...

Orthodoxy does not in the least constitute an historic past, recycled, but it is a living present, spreading the past into the present and in discussion with contemporary society. To the manifestation of Orthodoxy into contemporary society and into the raising of a Christian Orthodox people from the

historic past and the contemporary present great Russian theologians have contributed. Their theology is a chapter of the unifying constitution of Orthodoxy. The Institute of Unity of the Orthodox Nations of the Russian Church has been instrumental in this too...

We warmly thank the Russian Church, its Patriarch His Beatitude Kirill and the Institute of the Unity of Orthodox Nations in the person of Professor Dr Alexeev Valery Arkadevich for the award given to me. Our ancient Church of Alexandria, true to its history and tradition, will always be present in the strengthening of the unity of Orthodoxy around the world, so that it can be the one undivided Body of Christ and give to the ages a witness of love to all human beings as a remembrance of God and as a creation in His image".

Present at the award ceremony of the "Patriarch Alexios II" award, were Hierarchs of the Russian Church, His Excellency the Deputy Minister of the Interior of Russia Mr. Michael Bogdanov, Their Excellencies the Ambassadors of Greece and Egypt in Russia, Messrs M. Spinellis and Alaa Elhadidy, Ambassadors of European countries, representatives of Christian doctrines and faiths, academics, state officials and other dignitaries. In the evening His Eminence Metropolitan Ilarion of Volokalamsk, Chairman of the Department of External Church Affairs of the Moscow Patriarchate hosted a dinner in honour of His Beatitude.