

Orthodoxy:
The Faith in the Incarnation, not in Selfish Individualism and Consumerism



On Thomas Sunday, 22 April 2012, all Cathedrals in Russia held services in defence of the faith, desecrated holy places, the Church and its good name. Patriarch Kyrill led a procession around the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. Accompanied by clergy, His Holiness marched in a procession that held two icons, one of which had bullet-holes from the 1920s, and the other which had recently been hacked by an axe-wielding vandal this spring. Before the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, on a specially-built platform, stood a cross from a Cathedral which a knife-wielding vandal slashed on 20 March.

At the end of the procession, the clergy solemnly hoisted the damaged cross from the platform, and re-erected it at the main entrance to the Cathedral. Then, His Holiness held a service of prayer after which he addressed the congregation with a sermon. He called our current epoch disturbing, saying, "Today, when the forces of the Enemy attack us, we are told that the violation of holy places is just a manifestation of people's free will, they are merely commonplace. We do not threaten anyone, we do not use force, we do not have any posters... but we do have banners, icons, words, and prayers... our spirit was not broken when they blew up the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour and desecrated our holy places. We are here to stand before God to pray for our people, for our young people, that God may turn them from diabolic temptations and suggestions; we pray for the prosperity of our great country, the lands of Rus, the common spiritual space from the Black Sea to the White Sea, from the Baltic to the Pacific. May the Lord give you peace of soul and joy in your heart so that you might meet the future with hope".

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On Sunday, every major church in Russia held services "in defence of the faith, desecrated holy places, the Church, and its good name". The main event was at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, where a procession and service drew about 65,000 believers. The idea to hold a nationwide service came after a series of provocative actions and blasphemous antics at Russian churches.

Patriarch Kyrill described the current attempts to undermine the moral foundations of society and deprive it of spiritual values. Special video screens ensured that none of the believers missed any of the special events going on. One of the people present told me that they came to pray for the souls of blasphemers, and of the unity of the Church. His Holiness said, "I want to point up how much we need the Church and spirituality, for we need to cleanse the spirit. Every day we bathe our bodies; we need to cleanse our souls, too".

The intent behind the action is to consolidate society and show the power of the Church. According to Alexis Makarkin, the Deputy Head of the Centre for Political Technologies, "The Church fears the growth of secular attitudes in society. What the Church fears is a change in the same direction as in Western Europe. In those countries the role of the Church has declined; moreover, it has collapsed into the sphere of private life. In fact, this action, which is the hierarchy's idea, shows that a compromise position is unacceptable to the Church and that the

Church is ready to go all-out in defending its image, its position in society, and its view on social processes”.

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Earlier this month, senior clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church explained in a statement that it had been targeted by “those pushing through radical liberal values” over its opposition to same-sex marriages and consumerism.

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<http://en.rian.ru/society/20120422/172971191.html>

