



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill visits Katyn Memorial

On 15 July 2012, after celebrating the Divine Liturgy in the memorial Church of the Resurrection of Christ in Katyn, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia visited the Katyn memorial.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church officiated at the memorial service at the Alley of Memory, praying for all those innocent people who had been shot to death in Katyn.

The Alley of Memory unites the Russian and the Polish parts of the memorial complex. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill visited them after the service and laid flowers to the memorials.

Katyn is the Smolensk Golgotha.

In 1920s – 1940s, the Katyn forest was a place for mass shootings of Soviet and Polish citizens. Some ten thousand Soviet people and over four thousand captive Polish officers were buried there in nearly one hundred fifty graves.

The Kozyi Gory in the Katyn forest was a place of executions during the period of repression, which started in 1918 with clergymen as the first victims. The repressions continued in 1922, then in 1929, and in the beginning of 1930.

According to the 1937 decree of Nikolai Yezhov, General Secretary of the State Security, a thousand people were to be shot in the Smolensk region. On 8 December 1937, over seventy people were shot in the Katyn forest, including Archbishop Seraphim (Ostroumov) of Smolensk and Dorogobuzh. By 1938, up to one hundred eighty people were executed there daily. In the spring of 1940, four thousand

two hundred forty-one Polish officers, inmates of the Kozelsk concentration camp, were shot in the Katyn forest.

The Katyn memorial commemorating the victims of political repression was opened in 2000. The complex is conditionally divided into the Russian and the Polish parts. The Polish memorial includes mass graves, memorial crosses, and the memorial obelisk. Every April, the Polish delegation visits the memorial complex.

In the Russian part, the ten meter-high Orthodox cross was installed in front of the graves of the victims of political repression.

With the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, the Orthodox Church of the Resurrection of Christ was founded in 2010. In April 2010, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk took part in the laying of the foundation stone of the church.

The church was designed by architect Dmitry Pshenichnikov. According to the project, a large complex of buildings, which will be used for social work with children and adults, will be constructed. Thematic meetings and conferences will be held in a special hall. There will be facilities for pilgrims and for a refectory. The church complex will also include a belfry.

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