



## **Patriarch Kirill's message to the 5th Conference on Religions in Modern System of International Relations**

*His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia sent the following message to the 5th Conference on Religions in the Modern System of International Relations, which opened on 23 October 2009 at the department of international relations of St. Petersburg State University:*

Dear Participants in the Conference,

I cordially greet you all as you have gathered today at St. Petersburg State University for the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference on Religions in the Modern System of International Relations to discuss the resources of religions in peacemaking and conflict resolution.

Since the first conference the forum has considered a wide range of ways in which the religious factor can influence the life of society beginning from the ideological basis of the modern concept of human rights to practical problems involved in implementing the Russian World project. The insights gained in the discussion have enabled us to reflect anew on today's situation in international life and to offer models of church-society relations appropriate for the time.

The theme chosen for the conference this year is relevant at all times. It is the message proclaimed by our Saviour: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God* (Mt. 5:9).

A kind and sincere word and an utterly candid service of love and charity can in many cases produce much more than political means and military force. The key to healing a conflict, both between people and nations, often lies in the ability to overcome human pride.

Peace in the human society is built through establishing it first in people's souls. Of special importance here is the spiritual and moral condition of the military called to defend their fellow-citizens. In this connection, all possible support should be given to the decision adopted by the Russian leadership to revive the institution of army clergy in the country. It is my conviction that such wise steps combined with an open discussion on today's problems of war and peace will help people reject confrontation and incline their hearts towards peace, love and harmony.

I wish the participants successful and fruitful work and call upon you God's blessing.

**+ Kirill**

**Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia**

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