

AIDE: MUSIC HELPS CATHOLIC-ORTHODOX DIALOGUE

Observes Harmony Between Church Values

VATICAN CITY, MAY 24, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Music has played a crucial role in relations between Catholics and Orthodox, says a Vatican spokesman.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, director of the Vatican press office, noted that these relations took a step forward after leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church presented a concert last week in Rome.

The musical event was presented Thursday in the Vatican as a gift from Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to Benedict XVI on the occasion of the 5th anniversary of his Pontificate as well as his 83rd birthday.

Works of great Russian composers of the 19th and 20th centuries were performed in the concert. The highlight of the event was the interpretation of the "Song of the Ascension," composed by Archbishop Hilarion Alfeyev of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department of External Affairs of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The concert was preceded by a cordial message of the patriarch to the Pope, which was read by Archbishop Hilarion and "went far beyond a normal gesture of courtesy," Father Lombardi noted in the most recent of episode of Octava Dies.

The priest stated, "It is very clear in fact that in the context of the contemporary European cultural panorama, the Orthodox and Catholic positions on the great ethical problems are the same, because they derive from a vision of man inspired by Christianity."

He continued, "Metropolitan Hilarion, in his address, made explicit reference, for example, to the questions about life and the family."

The spokesman noted that the Pontiff's address, which he gave at the concert, "was more expansive and involved than those that he usually gives at the end of concerts, developing at length the theme of Europe's Christian roots, expressed not only in religious life, but also 'in the inestimable cultural and artistic patrimony' of the countries in which the Christian faith favored and promoted 'as never before human creativity and genius.'"

Father Lombardi affirmed, "In the face of a secularization that tries to prescind from

God and from his plan and ends by denying human dignity itself it is necessary to develop the proposal for a 'new humanism,' so that Europe might return to breathing with its 'two lungs,' thanks to the dialogue, the synergy between East and West, as well as between tradition and modernity."

He concluded that "the echo of the notes of great Russian music in the Vatican was an eloquent sign of the profound harmony that has been established on these crucial perspectives between the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches."

The priest described it as "a truly encouraging sign for the future."

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On ZENIT's Web page:

Patriarch Kirill's message: <http://zenit.org/article-29333?l=english>

Papal address at concert: <http://zenit.org/article-29335?l=english>

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