

RUSSIAN SPIRITUALITY TO BE CELEBRATED IN ROME

Highlights Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue

VATICAN CITY, MAY 7, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Catholic and Russian Orthodox leaders will together organize a celebration of the "Days of Russian Culture and Spirituality in the Vatican," which will take place later this month.

The celebration, which will be held May 19-20, was described today in a Vatican press conference.

The event, which is sponsored by the Moscow Patriarchate, the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Pontifical Council for Culture, includes a photographic exhibition, a symposium and a concert in honor of Benedict XVI.

Archbishop Gianfranco Ravasi, president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, stated that the program intends to show "the continuous crossing between the Russian cultural and musical traditions which are of a religious hue, and the elaboration on the part of these musicians who later entered Europe and manifested themselves at the highest levels of musical culture."

On May 19 the exhibition "The Russian Orthodox Church Today" will open in the Russian Orthodox parish of St. Catherine, with photographs by Vladimir Chodakov.

That same day there will be a symposium entitled "Orthodox and Catholics in Europe Today: The Christian Roots and the Common Cultural Heritage of East and West."

It will include interventions from Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; Archbishop Ravasi; Pavel Lungin, a Russian film director; Andrea Riccardi, founder of the Sant'Egidio Community; and Boris Ananiev.

Concert

The concert in honor of Benedict XVI will take place on May 20 in Paul VI Hall, with performances by the Russian National Orchestra, Moscow's Synodal Choir and the Chapel Horns of Russia. The concert is being offered by Patriarch Kirill I of Moscow and All Russia.

The days will be preceded by a May 14-18 visit from the Moscow Patriarchate's delegation to the Italian cities of Ravenna, Milan, Turin and Bologna.

The delegation will be led by the patriarchate's Department for External Church Affairs president, Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk.

The event is being planned to highlight the cultural, religious and ecumenical dimension and take a step forward in the dialogue between Orthodox and Catholics.

Monsignor Pasquale Iacobone, who is in charge of the Department of Art and Faith of the Pontifical Council for Culture, described this event as a "small but significant" step that reflects "a development and evolution perhaps unthinkable a few years ago."

He added, "We hope that the policy centered on culture, the great values and art will produce what we all expect -- and then we will let Providence act."

[With the contribution of Carmen Elena Villa]

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