
Coronavirus Covid-19: Russia, the Bishops' message. "Adhering to healthcare and hygienic standards, praying for beating the disease"

Coronavirus was also on the agenda of the plenary meeting of the Bishops' Conference of the Russian Federation, which ended in Irkutsk today. The Bishops "expressed their concern for the spreading of coronavirus in the world"; "urged the clergy and lay to pray to beat the disease and to adhere to healthcare and hygienic standards when they visit churches and attend liturgies, as instructed by the authorities in charge of fighting the spreading of the infection", was written in a press release issued at the end of the meeting. The Bishops announced that, from 25th March 2020 to 25th March 2021, the Catholic Church of Russia will celebrate the "Year of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God's Word". The Year will end with a pilgrimage in the Holy Land, the Bishops revealed, during which an image of the Blessed Virgin will be placed in the basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth. Preparations were also going on in Irkutsk in the run-up to the national Meeting of Families, due to take place in Moscow in July 2020, and new leaders were appointed at the helm of the Bishops' Conference. After three years, the president, bishop Klemens Pickel, will be replaced by mgr. Paolo Pezzi, archbishop of Moscow. The general secretary has been renewed too: the German Jesuit Stephan Lipke will replace the Russian priest Igor Kowalewski. "I will remember this session as particularly friendly. Even on issues that we dealt with from different perspectives, we easily found agreement", bishop Pickel posted in his blog.

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