

Awards recognise talent and noble deeds of their holders

Belarus has survived an uneasy period recently, without catastrophe or loss, states Alexander Lukashenko, presenting the Belarusian Presidential Award 'For Spiritual Revival' and special awards to figures of culture and art

As the President noted, Belarusians have kept their independence and civil peace, indicating a moral victory for the Belarusian nation. It has built a society based on laws of conscience, justice and care. Mr. Lukashenko stressed that it's pleasant to start the year by bestowing awards upon those who deserve recognition from our society for their talent and noble deeds. The Head of State added that such awards are the best indication of how greatly Belarus values acts of spirituality and humanity.

"No sorrow is unknown to others — as our nation knows in soul and body. Belarusians remain united in joy and sorrow. Unsurprisingly, the past year ended with the largest ever charity event in sovereign Belarus' history: *Our Children*," Mr. Lukashenko noted.

He believes that culture — based on Christian traditions and Slavonic roots — provides Belarusian people with inner strength. "It is our spiritual bread," stressed Mr. Lukashenko. He added that the state has never before rendered such powerful support to domestic culture. Every year, billions of Roubles are being injected into the restoration of architectural monuments in Polotsk, Gomel, Mir, Nesvizh and other Belarusian towns. The Bolshoi Theatre has been restored to its original beauty, while many other theatres and museums, alongside the Belarusfilm Studio, have been revived and modernised. The state is also the major sponsor of such projects as *The Slavonic Bazaar in Vitebsk*, *Alexandria Gathers Friends*, and the *Listapad* Film Festival. Belarus' cultural events are diverse.



President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, presents awards 'For Spiritual Revival' alongside those to 2011 figures of culture and art

"Belarusian civilisation has been created with the help of wisdom and words, not by fire or sword. Our land has given mankind such Christian beacons as Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya and Kirill Turovsky. Outstanding enlightener Frantsisk Skorina was born here, giving the Eastern Slavs their first printed publication 495 years ago. Belarus has enriched world culture with the poetry of Yanka Kupala and Yakub Kolas, whose 130th anniversary the country marks this year," the President emphasised.

He noted that the Year of Book in Belarus should inspire further development, opening wide horizons in the spiritual sphere. "Culture is aimed to be one of the

country's primary tasks; its current goal is to consolidate society, while strengthening the Belarusian state. People expect our masters to present works which will inspire millions of people," Mr. Lukashenko stressed.

Addressing the award holders, the President asserted that they are the elite of Belarusian society, saying, "You've proven, by your personal example, that ownership of treasures is unnecessary to help others. A generous heart and readiness to serve are the key."

Among the ten chosen for the 2011 'For Spiritual Revival' Presidential Award were doctors from the Early Intervention Department of the Central Children's Polyclinic in Gomel — who

saved thousands of babies from grave illnesses. The founders of a family-style orphanage, Galina and Igor Bushmakiny, were also honoured, alongside the Archbishop of Novogrudok and Lida Gury. Those who have created unique mosaics to immortalise First World War victims, and those responsible for a TV series about hero cities were also given the award. "Your works enrich the spiritual heritage of the Fatherland, while helping society become purer and kinder. We are grateful for your altruism and humanity," Mr. Lukashenko noted.

Special prizes were presented to nine figures of art and culture, including actress Bella Masumyan, ballerina Yekaterina Oleinik, and

teacher Yevgeny Gladkov. A prize from the Special Fund for Support of the Talented Youth, and an official letter of gratitude from the President, were conferred on Lidia Zablotskaya — who took part in *Junior Eurovision* in 2011. Her teachers and friends were also honorably mentioned.

Mr. Lukashenko congratulated everyone on their work, stating that Belarus will always revere and honour such cultural treasures, supporting culture and talented people — especially teachers, encouraging them in every way possible.

The awards ceremony was attended by the Metropolitan of Minsk and Slutsk Filaret, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus.

Generosity of family spirit finds its worthy reward

Parenting teachers from Nesvizh family-style orphanage — Igor and Galina Bushmakiny — have already decided how to spend their prize money from the 'For Spiritual Revival' Presidential Award

Nesvizh's District Executive Committee not long ago presented one of Bushmakiny's adopted daughters with a co-operative flat. However, an additional payment was needed after the house was put into exploitation. Using their prize money, the generous couple have decided to cover this and also buy some furniture for Natasha. Igor underlines that his family feels great support from the state in solving housing and other issues.

At present, Igor and Galina are



Igor and Galina Bushmakiny's large family

raising five children. Over the past twenty years, they've brought up 11 youngsters — who are all now settled in life, with their own jobs. Many have chosen creative professions,

such as painting or carpentry. There's even a chef in the family. The children don't forget their parents, often visiting. This year, 14 people gathered together around the New Year table.

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