Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk celebrates liturgy at Church of Antioch's Moscow Representation on its patron saint's day



On July 26, 2020, the Day of the Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations, visited the Moscow Representation of the Orthodox Church of Antioch to greet its rector and parishioner on their patron saint's day.

During the Divine Liturgy, which Metropolitan Hilarion celebrated together with the representative of the Patriarch of Antioch to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Metropolitan Niphon of Philippopolis, at the church of the Holy Archangel Gabriel, the archpastors were assisted by Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman, and the representation clergy.

After the liturgy, a thanksgiving to the Holy Archangel Gabriel was celebrated in the open in the churchyard.

Addressing the worshippers, Metropolitan Hilarion conveyed them a greeting and blessing from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

The head of the Department for External Church Relations said in particular:

> ‘You know how keenly His Holiness feels for the grief and suffering of Christians in the Middle East, including in the blessed biblical lands of Lebanon and Syria. In all that is going on today in these sacred lands we see God’s connivance and realize that the Lord will demand an accounting of how we responded to these challenges of time, to the prosecution against Christians, which the enemies of the truth of Christ have launched.
>
> The Russian Orthodox Church has always been and will be with the Orthodox Church of Antioch, and the Russian people have always been and will always be with the peoples of Syria, Lebanon and all the Christians of the Middle East. We will continue all that is possible for us to relieve the suffering of Christians who are subjected today to persecutions and genocide in countries of the Middle East.
>
> We turn today to the Lord with a prayer that He may strengthen the Christians of our Churches and help His Beatitude Patriarch John in his lofty, crucial and very hard service.
>
> We ask our Saviour to help us all to withstand the grief that have fallen to our lot, including the trials caused by a hard epidemic that has befallen now all the countries of the world without exception.
>
> We turn to the Most Holy Mother of God and pray that She may cover all of us and the whole Christian world with Her precious veil protecting us from every evil.
>
> We turn to the Heavenly Hosts, to Archangel Gabriel whose memory is celebrated today, praying that he may bring to us the good news of peace and salvation, that through the intercession of the Bodiless Powers we may always have happiness to participate in the Divine Liturgy. Here, on earth, it is celebrated together with us by the Angels of God, and whenever we assemble in a church for the Divine Liturgy, we feel how Angels are present together with us and strengthen us in their prayers. Every Christian has his or her own Guardian Angel sent by God to help humans on their life journey. He protects us from every evil, helps us in our journeys, in

illnesses and grieves and in other situations’.

Addressing Metropolitan Niphon, His Eminence Hilarion wished good health to him and the representation’s parishioners. ‘May the Lord preserve and save you and your flock for many good years’.

Speaking in response, Metropolitan Niphon said, ‘I cordially thank you for your coming to preside over today’s worship service, giving us a greeting and blessing from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill. And we all ask you to convey our sincere gratitude to the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church for his paternal attention. In my turn, I am pleased to convey to you personally the fraternal love of our Patriarch of Antioch, His Beatitude John X, and his blessing to all the present here’.

Speaking about the celebrations of that day, he stressed, ‘We praise Archangel Gabriel for the good news and inspiration sent through him both in the Old Testament and especially in the New Testament, for the gospel’s words addressed to the Most Holy Virgin, for the branch of God’s reconciliation with humans, which is so needed by all in this complex world. Looking at this branch as a symbol of hope, we fasten our eyes on today’s suffering of the people of the Church of Antioch and on the care and tangible support given by the Russian Sister Church by sending humanitarian aid to those in need, helping to restore the churches and monasteries ruined in military actions. Using this occasion on this blessed day, I would like, on behalf of the Primate of the Church of Antioch, His Beatitude Patriarch John and on behalf of our whole Church, to expressed boundless gratitude to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia for fraternal support that testifies to our spiritual unity’.

In memory of the common prayer and fraternal fellowship in the spirit of love and peace, the rector of the Antioch representation, Metropolitan Niphon, presented Metropolitan Hilarion with a sacred pectoral icon.

A memorable gift – a pectoral cross was also presented to Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman.

DECR Communication Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/45469/