70th birthday of Metropolitan Gavriil of Lovech celebrated in Bulgaria



On 19th July 2020, celebrations marking the 70th birthday of Metropolitan Gavriil of Lovech took place in the diocese of Lovech of the Bulgarian Patriarchate. Among those who came to greet the Bulgarian hierarch was Archimandrite Vassian (Zmeyev), representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to the Patriarch of Bulgaria.

After the Divine Liturgy celebrated at the Cathedral of Ss. Methodius and Cyril, Bishop Gerasim of Melnik, chief secretary of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Church, read out a message of greetings from His Holiness Patriarch Neofit of Bulgaria, in which His Holiness wished Metropolitan Gavriil good health, peace and longevity, and thanked him for his zealous and selfless service to God.

On behalf of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church Metropolitan Gavriil was presented with

a cross and a panagia.

Archimandrite Vassian thanked Vladyka Gavriil for the invitation to attend the celebrations and conveyed to him greetings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations.

"Having devoted your life to the service of God and imitating the great Bulgarian saints in their love for Christ and neighbours, you have always strived to 'fight the good fight of the faith' (1 Tim 6:12) and to show "in your teaching… integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured (Tit 2:7-8)," the letter from the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church reads, "Over the many years of your zealous labours for the good of the Holy Bulgarian Orthodox Church, you endured ordeals in fighting for the church unity and experienced joy over the spiritual revival of your people. It is with warmth that we always recall the time of your service in Moscow and your later frequent visits to our country. We highly appreciate your good attention to the life of the Russian Church and your willingness to share with her joys and sorrows. On this day of celebration I prayerfully wish you good health, spiritual peace and God's unceasing help in your archpastoral ministry."

As Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokalmsk noted in his message of greetings, the life journey of Metropolitan Gavriil "has been marked by manifold zealous labours in the spiritual vineyard of the Holy Bulgarian Orthodox Church, being a lofty example for younger generations."

Archbishop Longin of Bancheny, vicar of the diocese of Chernovtsy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, also greeted Metropolitan Gavriil, saying in particular, "I would like to express gratitude to the Bulgarian Church for standing firm in the faith and truth, for not recognizing the schismatics. The past five years have been the hardest ones for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. You supported us, and we thank the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and His Holiness Patriarch Neofit." Vladyka Longin conveyed to Metropolitan Gavriil greetings from His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine and, with his blessing, presented the Bulgarian hierarch with a lofty award of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – the Order of the Holy Prince Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles, 1st Class.

Metropolitan Gavriil of Lovech thanked all those present for their sincere prayers, warm words and good wishes. "Now, when I am 70 years old, life seems very short, but my life experience tells me ever more often now that there is no such joyful ministry and no such great happiness as serving the Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Church," the archpastor said.

DECR Communication Service

Photo from the website of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/45475/