Parishioners of the Russian Orthodox Church representation in Beirut attend festive Divine Liturgy in the city of Zahle



On 21 June 2020, the Day of All the Saints Who Shone Forth in the Russian Land, the community of the Beirut representation of the Russian Orthodox Church, led by their rector, Archimandrite Philip (Vasiltsev), made a pilgrimage to the city of Zahle at the invitation of Metropolitan Anthony of Zahle and Baalbek. On that day, there were celebrations there on the occasion of Metropolitan Anthony's 50th birthday.

During the Sunday Liturgy at the St. Nicholas cathedral in Zahle, His Eminence Anthony was assisted by the rector of the Beirut representation of the Russian Orthodox Church Archimandrite Philip (Vasiltsev) and the diocesan clergy.

The service was held in Arabic and Church Slavonic; the diocesan choir and the choir of the ROC Beirut representation conducted by Ms. Ye. Baranova sang.

Following the Prayer after Communion, Metropolitan Anthony addressed himself to the parishioners and members of the Russian Orthodox Church community with an archpastoral homily.

Then Archimandrite Philip read out a congratulatory message from the chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk to Metropolitan Anthony on the occasion of his 50th birthday. The message reads:

'Your Eminence, Dear Vladyka!

Kindly accept my cordial congratulations on your 50th birthday.

From your youth you have fully devoted your life to the service of the Church. After receiving an excellent theological education, you have chosen the narrow monastic path of withdrawal from the world and subjection to the will of God. With great diligence you served as abbot of the Bkeftin Monastery of the Dormition gaining a considerable spiritual and pastoral experience.

Our Lord the Chief Pastor Jesus Christ, looking on your work and humble heart, has called you to the lofty archpastoral ministry. In the person of Your Eminence the faithful of the Metropolis of Zahle have acquired an authoritative spiritual father and wise pastor. During my visit last autumn to your cathedral city at the invitation of its outstanding native the Most Reverend Metropolitan Niphon, I could personally see that you are a model for your flock in speech, in love, in spirit, in faith and in purity (cf. 1 Tim. 4:12).

With zeal and care you are carrying out the educational work among Lebanese youth calling young hearts to active participation in church life.

On the occasion of your significant celebration, dear Vladyka, kindly accept from me the wishes of peace, beneficial strengthening of your physical and mental resources, inspiration and God's help in your archpastoral work'.

Archimandrite Philip also conveyed to Metropolitan Anthony a congratulatory message from Russian Ambassador in Lebanon A. S. Zasypkin and presented him with a bouquet of roses.

After the liturgy, the fellowship continued at the parish hall of the Metropolis of Zahle.

On the same day, the pilgrims returned to Beirut.

Website of the ROC Beirut representation

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