# Pilgrims from Lebanon visit Damascus



On 15 February 2020, the feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple was celebrated at the Damascus representation of the Russian Orthodox Church. Numerous Orthodox pilgrims came to Damascus from Lebanon for the celebration. They were led by the rector of the Moscow Patriarchate Beirut Representation, Archimandrite Philip (Vasiltsev).

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Hegumen Arseny (Sokolov), representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to the Patriarch of Great Antioch and All the East. He was assisted by Archimandrite Philip.

After the Reading of the Gospel, Archimandrite Philip delivered a sermon.

After the liturgy, Hegumen Arseny read out a message from His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and

All Russia, on the occasion of the Orthodox Youth Day and welcomed the guests. In memory of the joint celebration, he presented Archimandrite Philip with an icon of the Most Holy Mother of God produced in Syria.

Among the worshippers at the liturgy, there were Russian ambassador of Syria, A. V. Yefmov, and parishioners of the representation – the faithful of the Russian Orthodox Church who reside in Damascus.

After the service, a festive teaparty took place at the representation's reception hall. It was arranged by the representation manager of the household, Ms Z. I. Kolpakova. After that, the pilgrims from Lebanon, accompanied by Hegumen Arseny, visited the places in the old part of Damascus associated with the early Christian history – the so-called Via Recta (Acts 9:11) and the House of Ananias, the baptizer of St. Paul, and then the Mariamite Cathedral of the Orthodox Church of Antioch.

In the evening of the same day, the pilgrims led by Archimandrite Philip returned to Lebanon.

*Damascus Representation of the Russian Orthodox Church*

*DECR Communication Service*

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