150th anniversary of Russian metochion celebrated in ancient Joppa



On 7th November 2019, at the Holy Apostle Peter and Righteous Tabitha Metochion of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission, the celebrations took place, marking the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Russian metochion in ancient Joppa – present-day Jaffa.

The Divine Liturgy on the feast day was celebrated by Metropolitan Antony of Korsun and Western Europe, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administration for Institutions Abroad, Patriarchal Exarch for Western Europe, who had arrived in the Holy Land with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, and Archbishop Damaskinos of Joppa (Patriarchate of Jerusalem), delegated by His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem.

Concelebrating with the hierarchs were Archimandrite Alexander (Yelisov), head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem; Archimandrite Roman (Krasovsky), head of the ROCOR Mission; Archpriest Igor Pchelintsev, sacristan of the metochion; the Mission clergy and ordained pilgrims.

Praying at the service were numerous worshippers – parishioners of the metochion and pilgrims.

After the Divine Liturgy the clergy led the procession with the cross to the tomb of the Righteous Tabitha, where a moleben was celebrated, and then to the Golgotha Cross installed in the territory of the old Jaffa Garden. There a rite of the blessing of the Cross was performed by Metropolitan Antony and Archbishop Damaskinos.

Later that day a festal concert took place. Performing in it were the Sunday school students and the church choir of the metochion. The grand meeting continued the celebrations, opened by Archpriest Igor Pchelintsev who highlighted the story of acquisition of the plot of land in Jaffa and the current activities of the metochion. Among those who spoke at the grand meeting were Archbishop Damaskinos of Joppa, who conveyed to all those present a blessing from His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem and All Palestine; Metropolitan Antony of Korsun and Western Europe, who conveyed warm wishes and blessings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia; H.E. Mr. Anatoly Viktorov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the State of Israel; and H.E. Mr. Yevgeny Vorobyov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the State of Israel. The meeting was followed by a repast.

That same day Metropolitan Antony of Korsun and Western Europe visited the Russian Museum and Park Complex in the city of Jericho. Opened in 2010, the complex includes a museum exposition displaying the artefacts found during the archaeological digs, an open-air archaeological exposition, and a park with unique trees, e.g., the ancient fig tree which the local legend associates with “the tree of Zacchaeus.”

Vladyka Antony also paid a visit to the Holy Apostle Zacchaeus Metochion of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jericho. The archpastor was shown around the Chapel of St. John the Baptist with its ancient Christian mosaics. According to a legend, at this place there once stood the house of Zacchaeus the publican, which the Saviour visited.

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