

## Primate of Orthodox Church of Jerusalem meets with Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus



On September 4, 2019, His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem, received in audience the Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Zaslavsk, who is on a visit to Jerusalem with a blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

Present at the meeting were also Archimandrite Alexander (Yelisov), head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, members of the Mission and representatives of the pilgrims groups with whom the Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus came to the Holy Land.

Metropolitan Pavel thanked His Beatitude Theophilos for the warm welcome and the blessing he gave him to come and serve in places associated with the world-salvific feat of Christ the Saviour.

His Beatitude Theophilos said that they in Jerusalem were always glad to welcome pilgrims from various fraternal Local Churches. 'We are delighted to see you because you, Your Eminence Pavel, lived,

served and worked in the Holy Land for many years', he added.

He also noted that among the most important deeds in the world today are the efforts to preserve the unity of the Holy Orthodox Church. He spoke of the profound grief he feels over the developments in Ukraine today. 'I recognize only one Orthodox Church in Ukraine, the one which is headed by Metropolitan Onufry', he said and stressed that, according to holy fathers, schism is the gravest sin against God's love on which church unity is based.

Metropolitan Pavel expressed heartfelt gratitude to His Beatitude for his firm stand in supporting the unity of Holy Orthodoxy, which will be unshakable if it succeeds in preserving its foundation – the canonical order.

In conclusion of the meeting, the hierarchs exchanged gifts. His Eminence Pavel presented His Beatitude with an icon of the Nativity of Christ executed by Belorussian painters from the St. Elizabeth Monastery in Minsk and the Medal devoted to the 180th anniversary of the Council of Polotsk which abolished the 1596 Union of Brest.

Patriarch Theophilos gave Metropolitan Pavel a commemorative pectoral icon depicting the icon of Our Lady of Jerusalem, the official portal of the Moscow Patriarchate reports with a reference to the site of the Belorussian Orthodox Church.

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