Over 20 carved icons are brought from Russia to Syria



Archbishop Feofilakt of Pyatigorsk and Cherkessk, Mr. Yevgeny Kirdyapkin, assistant to the Presidential Plenipotentiary Envoy to the North Caucasian Federal District (NCFD) and other members of the NCFD delegation visited Syria.

The visit was blessed by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and supported by Mr. Alexander Matovnikov, Presidential Plenipotentiary Envoy to the NCFD.

The delegation brought over 20 icons produced at the Orthodox workshop of Sergei Zakharchenko with the use of the unique carving to be handed over to the churches in Syria.

On 25 March 2019, Archbishop Feofilakt presented an icon of St. Matrona of Moscow to the metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church in Damascus. The icon will give spiritual support to the Orthodox compatriots living in Syria and remind them of their Motherland.

That same day the delegation was received by Bishop Ephrem of Seleucia, secretary of the Synod of the Orthodox Church of Antioch and vicar of its Primate, His Beatitude Patriarch John X. The gusts presented a carved icon of St. Sergius of Radonezh to the Patriarchate of Antioch. Bishop Ephrem thanked them for the gift and noted that St. Sergius was well known both in Russia and in Syria. “We hope that this icon will bear witness of our unity and our common faith that gives us strength to help one another,” Archbishop Feofilakt said.

On March 26, the delegation visited holy sites in Maaloula and Saidnaya. The guests from Russia presented and icon of St.Xenia of Petersburg to the Convent of St.Thecla. Archbishop Feofilakt said that the saint, like sisters of the convent, helped many people in need at the hard times.

At the church of Ss Sarkis its rector told the guests that icons here were copies as the originals were burned by the militants. The gift – an icon of St. Michael the Archangel – was highly appreciated. The prayer was said in the Aramaic, the language which Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke and which is spoken in Maaloula and vicinity even today.

An icon of St. George the Victorious was presented to Our Lady of Saidnaya Convent. The hegumeness showed the guests an iconostasis made in Aleppo in the 18th century and an icon embroidered by the sisters.

The delegation from Russia visited the Cherubim Convent, two Orthodox Christian cities – Al-Suqaylabiyah and Mharde located at the at the border of the Hama and Idlib governorates and the Khmeimim Air Base and presented a carved two-meter icon of St. Alexander Nevsky to its field church.

On March 31, Sunday of the Adoration of the Cross, Archbishop Feofiklakt celebrated Divine Liturgy at the metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church in the capital of Lebanon. Rector of the church, Archimandrite Filipp (Vasiltsev) concelebrated.

Petitions were offered up at the Litany of Fervent Supplication for the unity of the Orthodox Church and for keeping the Church from divisions and schisms. Archbishop Feofilakt offered up the prayer for Ukraine.

After the dismissal and welcoming words of Archimandrite Filipp, Archbishop Feofilakt greeted the worshippers and presented members of the community with an icon of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker made by craftsmen from the North Caucasus.

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