



Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk leads celebrations on patronal feast of the Moscow Representation of the Church of Jerusalem



On 27 November 2017, commemoration day of the Holy Apostle Philip, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Representation of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem in Moscow – the Church of the Holy Resurrection in Filippovsky side-street. Since one of the church's side-altars was consecrated in the name of the Holy Apostle Philip, its patronal feast is celebrated on this day.

Concelebrating with His Eminence were Archimandrite Stephan (Dispirakis), rector of the Church of the Holy Resurrection, representative of the Patriarch of Jerusalem to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia; Protopresbyter Vladimir Divakov, secretary of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia for the city of Moscow; and clerics of the church.

After the Litany of Fervent Supplication Metropolitan Hilarion said a prayer for peace in Ukraine.

After the Liturgy, a thanksgiving prayer was said before the icon of the Holy Apostle Philip.

Archimandrite Stephan (Dispirakis) greeted Metropolitan Hilarion and presented him with an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos.

Metropolitan Hilarion addressed all those present with a homily, saying in particular:

“Every time we gather in this holy church on the commemoration day of the Holy Apostle Philip, we hear the reading from the Gospel of St. John which tells us how the Lord Jesus Christ found this apostle who then found Nathanael and brought him to the Saviour. During this reading we hear several times the verb “find”. First the Lord Jesus Christ finds Philip and says to him, “Follow me” (Jn 1.43). Then Philip finds Nathanael and says to him, “We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (Jn 1.45). Again we hear the word “found.” Where did the Saviour find Philip? It was just said that the Saviour had found him, but here Philip comes to Nathanael and says, “We have found,” as if they had been walking around for a long time, looking for the promised Messiah. And finally when the Lord sees Nathanael He says that he saw him before under the fig tree. For when Philip told Nathanael that they had found him of whome Moses and the prophets had written, Nathanael asked, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (Jn 1.46). Philip said to him, “Come and see” (Jn 1.46).

In this one Gospel reading there are several episodes, several scenes, in which the Lord finds His disciples and they find their Teacher and Saviour. It happens by the will of God, for without God’s will man cannot find the Lord and come to believe in Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour.

“We venerate Apostle Philip as one of the disciples of Christ. He believed at once in Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah. And after he, together with the other apostles, had followed after Christ on His short path of serving people, Philip was also ready to die with Him. His further apostolic ministry showed that those had not been mere words. He gave his whole life to the Lord, just like the other apostles whom Christ had chosen as His disciples.

“In every generation the Lord finds His chosen ones. And in every generation there are people who find the Saviour and can say, just like Philip said to Nathanael, “We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote” (Jn 1.45). And it does not always happen because we walk around, looking for Him. More often it happens because the Lord Himself finds us somewhere. And when He finds us, we also find Him as our Saviour and dare speak of Him as of the One Whom we have found, for there was his call, and there was our active response, without which we could not become His disciples and followers.

“On the commemoration day of the Holy Apostle Philip let us pray to this apostle, beseeching him to grant us such faith and such determination to follow after Christ, which he had.

“I would like to cordially greet you, Father Archimandrite Stephan, with the patronal feast of your church. You have said that the Churches of Russia and Jerusalem are one Church. They are not just sister-Churches, but the Churches who for many centuries have been making their journey side by side, helping each other in difficult situations. On behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill I would like to assure you that this will go on, that the Russian Orthodox Church will always help her elder sister – the Church of Jerusalem, from which all the other Churches came into being.

“As I mentioned frequently, when speaking about the Church of Jerusalem, we can recall the following words from a divine service, “Rejoice, O holy Zion, mother of churches and dwelling place of God, for you were the first to receive remission of sins by the resurrection.” In this text call the Church of Jerusalem the holy Zion and mother of all Churches. We honour the Church of Jerusalem as the Church related to the Saviour Himself, for she is the custodian of His Holy Sepulchre and all the places associated with His earthly life and ministry.

“It is with particular joy that we are looking forward to the arrival in Moscow of His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem. He is coming to our city to take part in the celebrations marking the centenary of restoration of Patriarchate in the Russian Orthodox Church. I ask you to tell His Beatitude that we are waiting for him with love and will be, as always, happy to see him as a guest of the Russian Orthodox Church. We hope that the celebration, together with heads of the other Churches who will come to Moscow and with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and the assembly of hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church, will deepen even more our brotherly relations.

I congratulate all of you, dear fathers, brothers and sisters, on the commemoration day of the Holy Apostle Philip – the patronal feast of this holy church.

May God save you all!”

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