



## Russian parliament members visit Saidnaya Convent in Syria

On February 7, 2017, Russian State Duma deputies S. Gavrilov, D. Sablin and A. Yuschenko visited the Saidnaya Convent (Patriarchate of Antioch) in the Damascus Province, Syria. They were accompanied by Hegumen Arseniy (Sokolov), Moscow Patriarchate representative to the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East.

The Russian pilgrims were received by Abbess Febronia. She told them about the history of the convent founded in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and its recent hardships caused by attempts of terrorists to seize the convent and by bombardments from their side. She also introduced them to the life of the monastic community today. At present there are over forty nuns living at the convent.

Father Arseniy presented Sister Febronia with a pectoral cross and an icon of St. Cyril of Turov.

After a tour of the convent and a prayer at its church, the guests from Russia visited an orphanage close to the convent, which is run by the sisters, and gave the children gifts from Russia.

*DECR Communication Service*