His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem



On 19 November 2016, at the Patriarchal residence in St Daniel's Monastery, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem.

The high guest was accompanied by Metropolitan Timotheos of Bostra; Archbishop Aristarchos of Konstantina, Archimandrite Stephan (Dispirakis), representative of the Patriarch of Jerusalem to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia; and Hierodeacon Mark.

Representing the Russian Orthodox Church at the meeting were also Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Bishop Tikhon of Podolsk, administrator of the dioceses of Vienna, Austria and Hungary; Archimandrite Alexander (Yelisov), head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem; archpriest Nikolai

Balashov, DECR vice-chairman; and archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations.

Addressing His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos and the members of the delegation of the Church of Jerusalem, Patriarch Kirill said, “Dear brothers, I cordially greet you and thank you for accepting my invitation to share the prayer on the occasion of the 70th birthday of my humble person. Every time Your Beatitude and your esteemed brothers, dear to my heart, come to Moscow, it is a great joy for us… It is with special feelings that we always welcome Your Beatitude and representatives of the Holy Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of all Churches. Our Lord Jesus Christ blessed by his feet the land where the Church of Jerusalem carries out her ministry; it is the Church from which the apostolic word spread all over the world. You are the custodians of the Holy Sepulchre, of the holy sites, performing this service with great honour and dignity for several thousand years.”

As the Primate of the Russian Church noted, the Holy Land underwent many sufferings and destructions, as well as terrible political and military cataclysms, but the Patriarchate of Jerusalem managed to preserve the holy sites, often making enormous sacrifices, showing firmness in faith, fortitude and wisdom.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill emphasized that the Russian Orthodox Church always supported the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, showing deep respect and appreciation for its mission, important for the whole Orthodox world.

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos expressed his joy over the opportunity to visit the Russian Orthodox Church on the occasion of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill’s 70th birthday and thanked him for the invitation. According to the head of the Church of Jerusalem, these celebrations are of particular importance, helping strengthen the brotherly relations between the Churches of Jerusalem and Russia, and serving as yet another manifestation of the unity of the Holy Orthodox Church.

His Beatitude reminded all those present that the Russian people and the Russian Church had made a great contribution to the preservation of the shrines and Orthodox faith in the Holy Land.

As the high guest noted, the Church of Jerusalem suffered in the past and continues to suffer. “However,” he added, “the Cross of Christ and the Resurrection of Christ give us strength and opportunity to continue our ministry and bear our witness.”

His Beatitude also told about the restoration works at the Edicule in the Holy Sepulchre and about the reconstruction of the Basilica of the Nativity of Christ in Bethlehem. “We are aware of your interest in this project and of your contribution,” Patriarch Theophilos said and emphasized that the reconstruction

works had been intensified considerably thanks to the funds allocated, in particular, by the decision of the Russian President Vladimir Putin.

DECR Communication Service

Photo by the Patriarchal Press Service

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