Bulgarian Orthodox Church receives a part of the relics of St. Luka of Simferopol



With the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and at the request of His Holiness Patriarch Neophytos of Bulgaria, a part of the relics of St. Luka (Voino-Yasenetsky), Archbishop of Simferopol and Crimea, has been given as a gift to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. It has been brought to the Bulgarian capital by Bishop Antoniy of Bogorodsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate office for institutions abroad and administrator of the Moscow Patriarchate parishes in Italy.

On October 21, St. Luka's relics were brought from the Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church to the Moscow Patriarchate Sofia representation, where a brief thanksgiving was celebrated. Present at the services were, among others, Russian Ambassador to Bulgaria A. Makarov and Byelorussian Ambassador to Bulgaria V. Voronkovich.

Bishop Antoniy met with Bulgarian deputy minister for tourism Ms. Irena Georgiyeva at the Synodal chamber. They discussed the development of pilgrimage to Bulgaria from countries under the canonical

responsibility of the Russian Orthodox Church.

After the akathistos at the representation church of St. Nicholas in Sofia, Bishop Antoniy took the part of St. Luka's relics to the Chapel of the Protomartyr Marina. It was met there by His Holiness Patriarch Neophytos together with hierarchs and clergy of Metropolia of Sofia.

In a procession with the cross the relics of the saint were taken to the St. Nedelya (Kyriaki) Cathedral, where a brief prayer service was celebrated.

On the same day, Patriarch Neophytos received Bishop Antoniy in his residence. They discussed mutual cooperation in developing pilgrimage to the holy places of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Bishop Antoniy conveyed to the Patriarch a message of greeting from the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church and informed him about the work of his office for institutions abroad.

On October 22, the Day of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God, Bishop Antoniy celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the St. Nicholas representation church. Among the worshippers was Metropolitan Antony of Western and Central Europe. Present were also Russian Ambassador to Bulgaria A. Makarov and his wife.

After the Prayer of Fervent Supplication, Bishop Antoniy lifted up a prayer for peace in Ukraine.

After the dismissal, 'Many Years' was sung to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Holiness Patriarch Neophytos of Bulgaria, as well as the Bulgarian and Russian peoples and all the worshippers present in the church.

The Archimandrite Philip, rector of the Sofia representation of the Moscow Patriarchate, greeted Bishop Antoniy and presented him with a bishop's crozier.

In his response, Bishop Antoniy thanked the rector for his work and wished him God's help in his service. He addressed himself to Ambassador A. Makarov with a special greeting, noting that it was the latter's first presence at the Divine Liturgy in the St. Nicholas representation in the capacity of Russian ambassador.

After the liturgy Bishop Antoniy took part in the prayer service at the relics of St. Luka presided over by His Holiness Patriarch Neophytos at the St. Nedelya Cathedral.

On the same day the relics of St. Luka were taken to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church Metropolia of Plovdiv.

On October 23, Metropolitan Nikolay of Plovdiv celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the St. Marian Cathedral in Plovdiv. He was assisted by a large assembly of bishops and priests, among them the Chief Secretary of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church Holy Synod Archimandrite Gerasim (Georgiev), the rector of the ROC Sofia representation Archimandrite Philip (Vasiltsev), the rector of the ROC representation in Bari (Italy) Archpriest Andrey Boitsov and the Plovdiv clergy.

After the dismissal, Bishop Antony of Bogorodsk addressed Metropolitan Nikolay of Plovdiv and the clergy and laity, conveying them a message of greetings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

After that, Bishop Gregory of Branica read out a message from Patriarch Neophytos of Bulgaria to the ruling bishop, clergy and flock of the Metropolia of Plovdiv.

Metropolitan Nikolay of Plovdiv thanked Patriarch Kirill for the priceless gift, a part of the relics of St. Luka, and Patriarch Neophytos for the blessing of having the part of the relics in the Metropolia of Plovdiv.

As part of the celebration program, Bishop Antoniy of Bogorodsk, accompanied by Metropolitan Nikolay, visited churches in Plovdiv, the Ss Quiricus and Julietta monastery and the Memorial to the Liberator Soldier ‘Alyosha’, the website of the Russian Orthodox Church representation in Bulgaria reports.

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