His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrates litiya at the grave of Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom)



On 17 October 2016, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, whose visit to Great Britain is timed to the 300th anniversary of the Russian Orthodox Church's presence in the British Isles, performed the rite of the blessing of a new headstone at the grave of Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh at the Brompton Cemetery.

Later the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church celebrated a litiya for the late Metropolitan Anthony. Among those praying at the service were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Archbishop Yelisei of Sourozh; Archbishop Anatoly of Chersonese, vicar of the Sourozh diocese; Archbishop Innokenty of Vilnius and Lithuania; Bishop Sergy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administrative Secretariat; Bishop Antony of Bogorodsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administration for Institutions Abroad; Bishop Flavian of Cherepovets and Belozersk; Bishop Matfey of Skopin and Shatsk; numerous clergymen and parishioners.

After the litiya, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill addressed all those present, saying in particular:

“Eternal memory, eternal memory, eternal memory be to His Eminence the late Vladyka Anthony.

“Perhaps, all those gathered here remember Vladyka Anthony, met and talked with him.

“I recall my first meeting with Vladyka Anthony. It was as far back as 1965, when he came to Leningrad and celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of St Nicholas together with Metropolitan Nikodim of the blessed memory. I stood there with Vladyka Nikodim’s crozier and was astonished at Vladyka Anthony’s homily. He spoke quietly; perhaps, without a microphone his voice was not strong enough to be heard throughout the large cathedral. Yet, I stood near him and therefore was able to hear his profound homily from the beginning to end. It not only contained wise thoughts, but also, no doubt, conveyed a spiritual energy. At that moment, in my heart and in my mind, I realized that Vladyka Athnony was a unique person, God-gifted, with an exceptional charisma.

“Later we often met with Vladyka Anthony at various international conferences. I would visit Great Britain and he would come to Russia. We always had very good and sincere relationships and spoke openly even about the most delicate matters pertaining to the situation of the Church in the Soviet Union. Vladyka Anthony was always a very sympathetic listener. He never asked questions that were difficult to answer, because he knew, as well as we did, what was going on in the country and in the Church. We were of the same mind on many issues.

“When Vladyka Anthony fell ill and got weaker, we all, those who knew and loved him, wished him many years of life, at the same time being aware that human life cannot be prolonged artificially. Therefore I, at the time chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, had to ponder on how to organize the church life in Great Britain after Vladyka Anthony’s demise. As many of you know, the years that followed his death were difficult. However, by God’s mercy and, perhaps, through the prayers of Metropolitan Anthony, it all worked out well and the dark clouds that had formed over our community in Great Britain dispersed, and now hardly anybody remembers about them. The parish became stronger and more consolidated. It brings together those who remember Vladyka Anthony well, who loved him and were close to him, and new people, many of whom did not know him.

“I think that the duty of our Orthodox community, the duty of the Sourozh diocese is to cherish the memory of Metropolitan Anthony with great piety and love. He was the founder of the diocese; he established this Russian Orthodox community, open to the English people and to people of different nationalities… I am deeply convinced that the memory of Vladyka Anthony is cherished not only in the hearts of those who knew and loved him, but also in the hearts of those who were not acquainted with

him, but grew to love him thanks to his labours, his homilies and stories about him.

“May the blessed memory of Metropolitan Anthony live always in the grateful hearts of all Orthodox Christians of the Sourozh diocese. God save you!”

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