Patriarch Kirill celebrates thanksgiving at Xilourgou hermitage on Mount Athos



On May 28, 2016, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, accompanied by a delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, visited the Xilourgou hermitage dedicated to the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God, historically the first Russian monastery to be found on Mount Athos. Restoration work has been carried out in it in anticipation of the millennium of the Russian presence on Athos.

His Holiness was welcomed by Hieromonk Makary, spiritual father of the St. Panteleimon Monastery, Hieromonk Simeon, head of the hermitage, and the brethren of the hermitage.

The head of the Russian Orthodox Church visited the hermitage's old church of the Dormition and the church of St. John of Rila.

His Holiness consecrated the Ss Cyril and Methodius church at the cells, which were built in 1885, and

then led a thanksgiving at the newly consecrated church.

After the service, Patriarch Kirill addressed the congregation. He presented the hermitage with Eucharistic vessels.

Then His Holiness, accompanied by Father Simenon, inspected the hermitage's facilities.

***

The Xilourgou ('carpenter' Gr.) hermitage dedicated to the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, is the first monastery to be founded on Athos. It is located on the eastern side of Mount Athos, an hour's drive from Karyes. It is part of the Russian St. Panteleimon Monastery.

The hermitage was founded in the mid-10th century. From the early 12th century, it was referred to as a 'Russian' cloister. It was in Xilourgou that Russian pilgrims to Athos used to be accommodated.

The move of Russian monks from Xilourgou to the St. Panteleimon Monastery took place in 1169, under Abbot Lavrenty, by the decision of the general meeting of the Athonite abbots, who transferred the St. Panteleimon Monastery to the ownership of Russian monks. Since that time, Xilourgou has been attached to the St. Panteleimon Monastery.

In the 19th century, in addition of the church of the Dormition, two more churches were built at the hermitage, one dedicated to St. John of Rila and the other to Ss Cyril and Methodius.

The hermitage's main shrine is the Icon of Our Lady of the Sweet Kiss, which was presented to it in 1802.

In the recent years, the hermitage has been under restoration. The church of St. John of Rila, which was in a catastrophic condition, has been restored; the cells have reconstructed, and the access road has been repaired.

Patriarchal Press Service

DECR Communication Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/49463/