



## **Patriarch Kirill consecrates a church and celebrates at Old Roussik monastery on Athos**



On May 28, 2016, His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, who is on a pilgrimage to Holy Mount Athos, visited the Old Roussik hermitage, the second monastery after Xilourgu to be founded by Russian monks on Athos.

From 2012 to 2016, the Old Roussik has been under complex restoration.

Patriarch Kirill consecrated a church dedicated to St. Panteleimon and celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the newly-consecrated church. He was assisted by a great assembly of bishops, abbots and priests. Present in the church was A. Beglov, Presidential Envoy in Central Russia and head of the Presidential working group for preparing the celebrations to mark the millennium of the Russian presence on Mount Athos, and Mr. B. Legoida, head of the synodal department for the Church's relations with society and mass media.

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

Prayers were also said for the repose of the soul of the late Metropolitan Feodosy (Protsyuk).

Hieromonk Makary, spiritual father of the St. Panteleimon Monastery, greeted the Patriarch on behalf of the monastic community and presented him with a canvass of Old Roussik painted by renowned artist B. Nesterenko, who addressed the Patriarch on behalf of the icon-painters who made the frescos of the cathedral. He also presented Mr. Beglov with an image of Old Roussik.

His Holiness Kirill delivered a primatial homily and presented the cathedral with an icon of Our Lady of Iveron and an Easter egg.

After that the primate inspected the Old Roussik facilities and came back to the St. Panteleimon Monastery to share a meal with the brethren.

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The Old Roussik or Upland Roussik hermitage is the second Russian cloister to be founded on Athos. In 1169, at a request of the Russian monastic community led by Hegumen Lavrenty, the abandoned Monastery of the Thessalonian with a church of St. Panteleimon was transferred to Old Roussik.

It was in this monastery that St. Sava of Serbia took monastic vows.

For the several centuries of its history, the hermitage enjoyed donations from such personalities as Serbian Tsars, Moldavian and Balash sovereigns and Russian autocrats.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the brethren resettled closer to the see, to the place where the Russian Monastery of St. Panteleimon is located today.

In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Upland Roussik began its period of decay, which lasted till 1868, when churches of St. Panteleimon and Our Lady of Pochayev were built in its territory. The churches and the facilities of the hermitage were built thanks to generous donations from Russia in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, there were 20 monks, after whose death the hermitage was deserted.

The historical events of World War I and the 1917 Revolution left a heavy mark on the fate of the entire Russian monasticism on Mount Athos. The abandoned Old Roussik turned into ruins.

In the period from 2012 to 2016, complex restoration work has been carried out in Old Roussik. St.

Panteleimon's was fully painted anew; the monastic cells have been prepared for living; a new river-bed has been created, and the territory has been put in order. The cell with the chapel of Our Lady of Pochayev has been restored.

*Patriarchal Press Service*

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Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/49464/>