Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church has arrived in Athos



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia began his pilgrimage to the Holy Mountain of Athos on May 27, 2016.

Meeting the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church at Thessaloniki Macedonia international airport were Metropolitan Nikodimos of Kassandreia; Russian Consul General in Thessaloniki Mr.Alexei Popov; Greek deputy minister of foreign affairs Mr. Ioannis Amanatidis; minister for Macedonia and Thrace Ms. Maria Kollia-Tsaroucha; and the representative of the ministry of foreign affairs in Northern Greece Mr. Ioannis Vikilidis. Among those meeting His Holiness Patriarch Kirill at Daphne sea port in Athos were the Governor of Athos Mr. Aristos Kasmiroglou; representatives of the Holy Kinot, hieromonks Pavlos and Hieronimos; and Mr. Alexander Beglov, Presidential Plenipotentiary Envoy in the Central Federal District and head of the Presidential working group on the preparation of celebrations marking the millennium of Russian monasticism on Mt. Athos.

This is the second visit of the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church to the Holy Mountain. The first one, during which His Holiness visited many Athonite monasteries, took place in 2013. The current visit is linked with Russian monasticism on Athos. After meeting with the Protos and with the members of the Holy Kinot His Holiness will proceed to the Russian Monastery of St. Panteleimon.

During his pilgrimage His Holiness will celebrate at the Old Roussikon and at the Xilourgou scete, the original site of Russian monasticism. On Sunday, His Holiness is planning to celebrate Divine Liturgy at the Monastery of St. Panteleimon.

The Holy Mountain of Athos plays a special role in the spiritual life of the Russian people. The millennium of Russian monasticism on Athos is widely celebrated in Russia this year. The Church and the state are organizing exhibitions, concerts and conferences. Renovation work in the monastery has been done during last years thanks to the Public Board of Trustees established in 2011 and chaired by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

Russian monasticism in Athos was first mentioned in 1016. The library of the Great Laura of St. Athanasios of Athos keeps the document with the signatures of the abbots of all monasteries on the Holy Mountain, including the signature of the hegumen of the Russian monastery which reads ‘Gerasim monk, by the grace of God presbyter and hegumen of the monastery of the Russians.’

The history of Russian monasticism on Mt. Athos is linked to three centers: the Russian Xilourgou Monastery of the Theotokos; the Old Roussikon; and the Monastery of St. Panteleimon, or New Rousssikon, which was built in the 18th century and has become the main Russian abode on Mt. Athos.

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