



Primate of Bulgarian Orthodox Church visits Russian Metochion in Sofia

On 15 February 2015, Metropolitan Domitian of Vidin celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Church of St Nicholas the Miracle-Worker, Metochion of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia in Sofia.

Concelebrating with him were Metropolitan Longin of Saratov and Volsk; Archimandrite Gerasim (Georgiev), chief secretary of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church; Archimandrite Philip (Vasiltsev), rector of the Russian church in Bulgaria's capital; Rev. Neľuț Opri, representative of the Romanian Orthodox Church at the Bulgarian Patriarchal Throne; Rev. Alexander Chebotarev; protodeacon Ivan Petkov; and clerics of the Metochion.

Praying at the Liturgy, which concluded the programme of commemorative events marking the 65th anniversary of the demise of Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev), was His Holiness Patriarch Neofit of Bulgaria.

According to the tradition established in all churches in Bulgaria, the Russian Tsar-Liberator Alexander

He and all the soldiers who had died for the liberation of the Bulgarian land from the Turkish yoke were commemorated during the Divine Liturgy.

After the Dismissal, the Primate of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church greeted all the worshippers. In his primatial homily he told about the life of Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev; 1881-1950), rector of the Russian church in Sofia and dean of the Russian parishes in Bulgaria in the period from 1921 to 1950. Patriarch Neofit said, in particular:

“Vladyka Seraphim is a rare example of exceptional purity, chastity, righteous life, wondrous humility, meekness, kindness, patience and mercy. He was a hierarch wise in God, with clear pastoral conscience. He devoted all his life to Christ, striving to win piety and grace and grow in virtue. He was zealous in preserving the Orthodox faith and confessed, with both boldness and meekness and love, the Truth, Which is Christ Himself.

“His theology is not a fruit of scholastic erudition, but of love for Christ and of life according to His commandments. And it seems that God Himself witnessed to the rightness of his beliefs by taking his soul on the Feast of Orthodoxy.”

His Holiness greeted Metropolitan Longin of Saratov and Volsk who had arrived in Sofia with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to take part in the commemorative events as the head of a delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Primate of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church presented Metropolitan Longin with the Order of Sts Cyril and Methodius (1st Class).

The hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church expressed his joy over the opportunity to visit Bulgaria again and thanked His Holiness and the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church for the high award, saying, “Bulgaria is always in my heart. Many people whom I came to know during the four years of my studies at the University of Sofia are still dear to me. I mean, first of all, you, Your Holiness. I thank you for all those years which I spent under your guidance.”

Metropolitan Longin also expressed his hope that “the desire of so many hearts for the canonization of Vladyka Seraphim will be fulfilled in due time.”

On behalf of the clergy and parishioners of the Metochion, Archimandrite Philip (Vasiltsev) thanked His Holiness Patriarch Neofit for devoting his attention to the Russian church and for taking part in the commemorative events marking the 65th anniversary of the demise of Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev). The rector of the Metochion said, in particular, “These celebrations have become an evidence of unity of our peoples in Christ: of that God-commanded unity which we must uphold and strengthen. Thus we will grow in our faith in Christ the Saviour. It is in Him alone that we can be united. May God preserve our

unity till the end of time.”

Later Metropolitan Longin of Saratov and Volsk said a litiya at the burial place of Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev) in the crypt of St Nicholas Church. Among those who prayed at the service was the Primate of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the website of the Metochion reports.

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