



Celebrations marking Grand Consecration of Russian Church of St. Nicholas in Sophia led by Patriarch Neophyte of Bulgaria



November 30, 2014, the centenary of the Grand Consecration of the church of St. Nicholas of Myra in Lycia in Sofia, which is the representation of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to the Patriarchal See of Bulgaria, was marked by the Divine Liturgy celebrated by the Primate of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

His Holiness Patriarch Neophyte was assisted by a great assembly of hierarchs including Metropolitan Kirill of Yekaterinburg and Verkhoturye, head of the official delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate to, and Metropolitan Mitrofan of Lugansk and Alchevsk, head of the department for external church relations, Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Present at the service were Simeon II of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, head of the Royal House of Bulgaria, Sofia Mayor Ms. J. Fandykova, and other Bulgarian officials, as well as Russian Ambassador Yu.

Isakov and other Russian dignitaries.

After the Prayer of Fervent Supplication, the congregation prayed for peace in Ukraine.

According to the tradition of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the Russian Emperor-Liberator Alexander II and all the Russian, Bulgarian and other soldiers who fell in action for the liberation of Bulgaria from the Ottoman yoke, were prayed for at the Great Entrance.

Addressing the congregation after the liturgy, Patriarch Neophyte said in particular, “Let us thank the Lord for the joy of brotherly communion and opportunity to show the power of our unity in the Lord and sacrificial love that has always bound together the Russian and Bulgarian peoples”.

His Holiness also thanked Archimandrite Philip (Vasiltsev), rector of St. Nicholas’s, for the work carried out to restore the church and recover its original beauty.

Archimandrite Philip, in his response to His Holiness, noted in particular that the presence of King Simeon at the liturgy was deeply symbolic, as one hundred years ago the Great Consecration of St. Nicholas’s was honoured by the presence of his father, a godson of the Russian Passion-Bearer Tsar Nicholas II who was to suffer martyrdom in Yekaterinburg. He also thanked the Bulgarian Orthodox Church for accepting a large inflow of Russian émigrés in the period from the 20s-40s of the last century. At that time, the Russian church became a center of religious life for many exiles from the Soviet Russia.

The head of the Moscow Patriarchate official delegation, Metropolitan Kirill, greeted the worshippers and guests, noting that St. Nicholas’s is a symbol of uninterrupted spiritual bond that has always existed between the peoples nourished by the two sister Churches.

He presented the donators of the ROC church representation and those who worked hard to prepare the centenary celebrations with Russian Orthodox Church’s awards.

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