Primate of the Orthodox Church of Antioch venerates shrines in the Church of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted



January 28, 2014 – His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch and All the East, during his official visit to the Russian Orthodox Church, visited the Moscow Church of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted-in-Bolshaya Ordynka. He was welcomed by the rector of the church, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations.

Patriarch John X bowed before the venerated Icon of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted, the main shrine of the church, and proceeded to the sanctuary.

In greeting the guest, Metropolitan Hilarion spoke about the old spirit of martyrdom, "which is manifested today in the feat of confession accomplished by His Beatitude John X, as well as bishops of the Orthodox Church of Antioch, her clergy, monastics and lay people for whom the very stay in the old land of Syria involves the risk of their life. Some of them including His Beatitude's own brother are in

captivity. The Russian Orthodox Church prays every day for their deliverance from captivity. Nuns of an old convent have been taken hostage; many Christians have had to leave their native land to live in exile".

Metropolitan Hilarion also said that Russian President Vladimir Putin did much to prevent the development of the situation in Syria according to the worst scenario. "Today we are filled with hope that the Lord will show mercy for the Syrian people and the Orthodox Church of Antioch and that the suffering of Christians in the land, in which they have lived for twenty centuries and were the first to be called Christians, will be stopped and peace will come to the blessed land of the Middle East".

Speaking in response, His Beatitude John X thanked the Russian people for their support for Syria and Lebanon by prayer and humanitarian aid. He expressed special gratitude to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia for the invitation to visit Russia. "We all know that the relations between the Churches of Antioch and Russia have a long history", he said noting that the two Churches have common saints including the great Russian saint Sergius of Radonezh. "Our country is going through hardships today", he continued, "but we will also be messengers of peace. We wish peace and happiness to all".

His Beatitude thanked Metropolitan Hilarion, his old friend, for his work as chairman of the DECR. He presented him with a crosier incrusted with pearls made by Damascus masters, wishing that "he may bear the memory of the Patriarchate of Antioch in his heart".

Then His Beatitude blessed the congregation and answered questions from journalists. He said in particular that the Church of Antioch was praying for a success of the Geneva negotiations on Syria, so that the problems existing in that country could be solved in a peaceful way. He expressed profound gratitude to the head of the Russian State and his staff for their contribution in the struggle for the achievement of peace in Syria. He also expressed hope that the hostages kidnapped recently in Syria, including the Orthodox Metropolitan Paul (Azigi) and Syro-Jacobite Metropolitan John (Ibrahim), are alive and will be set free.

DECR Communication Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/51798/