His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with a delegation from Athonite Monastery of St. Paul

On 7th January 2014, after Grand Compline celebrated at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with a delegation from the Monastery of St. Paul on Mount Athos.

The delegation led by Archimandrite Parthenios (Murelatos), abbot of the monastery, brought the Gifts of the Magi to Moscow the day before.

Taking part in the meeting held at the Patriarchal chambers of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour were Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administrative Secretariat; archpriest Nikolai Balashov, deputy chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; and Mr. Rudov, head of the Committee that organized the bringing of the relic to the Russian Orthodox Church.

'I am happy to meet you on the day when the Holy Mountain of Athos and the Russian Orthodox Church glorify the born Saviour. The bringing of the relic greatly delights our people,' His Holiness said while welcoming Archimandrite Parthenios and the brethren.

'Thousands are queuing to venerate the Gifts. This is the testimony of the living faith of our people. The Orthodox faith becomes even stronger by God's mercy and through the prayers of the new martyrs and confessors of our land.

'We live in freedom today, and the Church is free to do whatever she deems necessary. We are reviving a wonderful tradition of the pre-revolutionary time to bring holy relics from the Holy Land, Mount Athos, or any other venerated places,' His Holiness added.

He expressed the gratitude of the Russian Orthodox Church to Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, ecclesial authorities of Mount Athos, Archimandrite Parthenios and brethren of St. Paul's Monastery, as well as to the organizers for the bringing of the Gifts of the Magi to Russia on Christmas days.

'These days will not go easy for the brethren who accompany the holy relics, and I wish you spiritual and physical strength. I believe, however, that you will share the joy and feel the warmth of the hearts of the people coming to venerate the relics.'

Archimandrite Parthenios noted that the brethren were happy to be in Russia and see the testimony of the profound faith and piety of people who venerate holy relics. Her thanked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill for his kind words and invited him to visit the Monastery of St. Paul.

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