His Holiness Patriarch Kirill venerates Panagia Portaitissa at Iveron Monastery



His Holiness Patriarch Kirill visited the Iveron Monastery, celebrated a prayer service and venerated the Iveron icon of the Mother of God, also called Panagia Portaitissa (Gate-keeper) at the chapel.

Hegumen of the monastery, archimandrite Nathanael welcomed His Holiness and said that the exact copy of the wonderworking icon could be found in central Moscow. “Panagia Portaitissa has become the heart of Holy Rus,’ while we have become brothers, as we have her as our common mother and intercessor. While in Moscow, we feel at home, and when we receive pilgrims here, and first of all You, Your Holiness, we feel that we receive our brothers at home?” he added.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church addressed the hegumen and the brethren. He spoke at length about the history of the icon and also about the return of its first copy to the Church a year ago by Russian President Vladimir Putin’s personal instruction after the Patriarch’s request. The icon is now at its original place, at the Novodevichy Convent in Moscow. The return was a great event: many people,

including myself and the President, met the icon in solemn procession of the cross, and now thousands of believers can venerate the miraculous copy of the Iberian icon of the Mother of God.

Hegumen Nathanael presented a copy of Panagia Portaitissa icon and a copy of a silver reliquary kept in the monastery to His Holiness. Patriarch Kirill donated an icon of St. John the Theologian to the monastery and left an entry in the distinguished visitors' book.

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