His Holiness celebrates at the Russian Monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mount Athos



On 5 June 2013, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral church of the Russian Monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mount Athos. Concelebrating were Metropolitan Apostolos of Mileta, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate on the Holy Mountain; Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR); Archbishop Feognost of Sergiev Posad, abbot of the Laura of the Holy Trinity and St, Sergius; Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administrative Secretariat; archimandrite Jeremiah (Alekhin), hegumen of the monastery; hieromonk Makary, epitropos and father confessor of the monastery; archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR deputy chairman; archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for Inter-Orthodox relations; and protodeacon Vladimir Nazarkin, assistant to the DECR chairman.

Praying in the sanctuary was schema-archimandrite Iliy (Nozdrin). Among the worshippers were Russian Presidential Envoy in the Central Federal District, Alexander Beglov; Chairman of the State Duma Committee for Commonwealth of Independent States and relations with compatriots, Leonid Slutsky; Chairman of the Synodal Information Department, Vladimir Legoida; and brethren of the monastery.

After the Liturgy, archimandrite Jeremiah presented His Holiness with an icon of all saints. In his homily, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church said that he had celebrated the Divine Liturgy with a special feeling. Many generations of monks incessantly prayed to the Lord for our Fatherland, our people and the salvation of human souls in this church, which is the centre of spiritual life in the Monastery of St. Panteleimon.

"Athos has always fulfilled a special mission by keeping the candle of Orthodoxy burning and by praying for the whole world. The monks' life goes on far away from worldly vanity; they remain capable of seeing and feeling the priority in life; they understand that the word of God is indisputable, that it is not a philosophical error, but Divine revelation about the meaning and purpose of human life. They bear a special responsibility to pray not only for themselves, but for the whole world.

"Everyday in your prayers you are asking the Lord to prolong human history and give people an opportunity to repent. Pray for our Fatherland: we need your help and your prayerful support in our struggle for preserving Orthodox faith."

His Holiness wished the brethren to keep the purity of Orthodoxy and the purity of their hearts and presented them with the icon-lamp which once hung over the shrine with the relics of St. Panteleimon, but had been moved away from the monastery many decades ago and has been found in Russia recently. Patriarch Kirill made another donation to the monastery – a copy of the Kursk-Root Icon of the

Mother of God.

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, who is also the head of the Foundation for restoration of the monastery, sent an icon of all Russian Athonite monks glorified by the Church.

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