Gift of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill is handed over to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI



On 23 March 2013, Pope Francis of Rome met with Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in Castel Gandolfo, papal summer residence. It was for the first time that after his election and enthronement the Pope of Rome visited his retired predecessor.

After a short prayer, Pope Francis handed over to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI an icon of the Mother of God, called 'Look Down with Favour on My Lowliness', which was presented to him in the end of private audience on March 20 by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. Metropolitan Hilarion said, "the first steps of Your Holiness after the election were marked by lowliness and humility." Pope Francis replied that he lacked humility and asked for prayers to the Lord to grant it to him.

While giving Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI the icon presented by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, Pope

Francis said: I was told that this icon is called ‘Mother of God of Humility’ and I dare say that I thought of you so humble in your pontificate. “Thank you, such a gift!’ replied Pope Emeritus while taking the icon.

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