President Putin attends the opening of a Pilgrims House near the Jordan River

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On June 26, 2012, during his visit to Jordan, Russian President Vladimir Putin attended the inauguration of a Pilgrims House for Russian pilgrims in the territory of the religious and archaeological preserve 'The Place of the Baptism of Jesus Christ on the Jordan River'.

Participating in the ceremony from the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem were His Beatitude Theophilos, Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem and All Palestine; Metropolitan Benedict of Philadelphia, patriarchal representative to Jordan; Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, general secretary of the Church of Jerusalem's Holy Synod; and members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre. The Moscow Patriarchate was represented by Archbishop Mark of Yegoryevsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's office for institutions abroad; Archimandrite Isidore (Minaev), head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem; and Hegumen Feofan (Lukyanov), deputy head of the Mission.

Among the honorary guests were Prince Talal Ghazi Bin Muhammad of Jordan, personal representative of the King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Abdullah II, statesmen and public figures from the two countries, and Russian Ambassador A. Kalugin to Jordan.

Before the opening ceremony, the rooms of the Pilgrims House and its chapel were blessed by Patriarch Theophilos assisted by Metropolitan Benedict and Archbishop Mark.

In his remarks on the occasion of the inauguration of the Pilgrims House, Mr. Putin thanked the King of Jordan Abdullah II who 'did not just give the land to the Russian Federation to own but also gave his wholehearted support to this significant project'.

'Jordanian friends have done all that is possible to help our masters erect a Russian house here. And we know how important it is for thousands of pilgrims who come to these places every year. Russian people have come to visit these places since the 13th century. The preservation of holy places brings nations nearer to each other and promotes common high moral values. The Middle East, as is known, is a crossroad of world religions and has experienced various periods in its history, including dramatic ones. But the traditions of mutual understanding and mutual enrichment of cultures and ways of life have always been strong here', he said.

Mr. Putin expressed the conviction that the Pilgrims House will always be open to all those who cross its doorsteps with good intentions and that peace, harmony and mutual understanding will always prevail in it.

Patriarch Theophilos, who spoke next, noted that the holy place of Christ's Baptism is visited by a growing number of pilgrims from various countries. Russians make up a considerable part of them. He assured the gathering that he will always pray for the Orthodox people of Russia.

In the course of the ceremony, Mr. Putin conferred on Prince Bin Talal Ghazi Muhammad the Order of Friendship in recognition of 'his great contribution to the development and consolidation of friendship and cooperation between Russia and Jordan'.

The prince warmly thanked the Russian president for the high award. He made a high appraisal of the courage and devotion of pilgrims from the Russian Orthodox Church who come to the Holy Land despite the tense political situation in the Middle East. In conclusion, the prince expressed hope that with the opening of the Pilgrims House the flow of pilgrims from countries under the jurisdiction of the Russian Church would grow.

On behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, Archbishop Mark warmly thanked Vladimir Putin, Patriarch Theophilos and Prince Bin Talal Ghazi Bin Muhammad for the active support they gave to the implementation of the project for building a Russian Pilgrims House at the place of the Baptism of Jesus Christ.

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The construction of the compound began on the initiative of Mr. Putin when a 1-hectare plot of land was given by the King of Jordan Abdullah II in 2006 to the Russian Orthodox Church for limitless and free use. In 2012, the land was transferred to the possession of the Russian Federation.

DECR Communication Service

Source: Website of the President of the Russian Federation

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/53987/