5th anniversary of the consecration of Trinity Church marked in Pyongyang

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With the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, a Russian Orthodox Church delegation led by Archbishop Mark of Yegorievsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's office for institutions abroad, visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for celebrations marking the 5th anniversary of the consecration of the Trinity Church in Pyongyang.

On August 12, the delegation including Archpriest Igor Zuev, rector of St. Nicolas's church at Golutvin, and Mr. D. Petrovsky, a staff member of the DECR was met by Mr. George Ho, chairman of the North Korean Orthodox Committee, clerics of the Trinity Church, representatives of the Russian embassy in North Korea, as well as Archpriest Sergiy Yakutov, who brought a delegation of the Vladivostok diocese for the celebrations in the North Korean capital.

Later that day, the guests attended the reception given by Russian Ambassador V. Sukhonin on the occasion of the 66th anniversary of the liberation of Korea.

On August 13, Archbishop Mark celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Trinity Church. He was assisted by the clergy from Vladivostok and local priests. Present at the service were Ambassador Sukhonin and his staff, as well as diplomats from Romania, Switzerland, Ethiopia and other countries and representatives of international organizations.

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After the service Archbishop Mark conveyed to the congregation the words of greeting and blessing from Patriarch Kirill, who on that day five years ago consecrated the church and ordained the first ever

North Korean Orthodox priest. He thanked the country's leadership, noting that it was Kim Jong-il who during his stay in Russia in 2002 made the decision to build an Orthodox church in North Korea.

In his address to the congregation, the chairman of the North Korean Society of Believers, Chang Jae-on, congratulated the congregation on so significant a date in the history of Orthodoxy in North Korea and expressed hope that the Russian Church will continue performing her lofty service in the country.

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Later that day, the Russian Orthodox church delegation met with Yang Hyeong Seop, a member of the Politburo of the Supreme Council of the Workers' Party of Korea. He saw in the anniversary of the Trinity Church a testimony of cooperation between Russia and North Korea in religious sphere, saying that 'faith and religion will play a considerable role in the development of our relations'.

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On August 15, when the 66th anniversary of the liberation of Korea was marked, the Russian Orthodox delegation took part in laying wreaths to the Liberation Monument, a memorial to Soviet soldiers at the Teadong River bank in central Pyongyang and at the memorial to Soviet soldiers at the city cemetery. The ceremonies were led by Ambassador Sukhinin.

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Archbishop Mark and Ambassador Sukhinin had a working talk at the Russian embassy. They discussed a wide range of issues concerning the strengthening of Russian-Korean relations in the humanitarian sphere, in which the Trinity Church plays an important part. They also considered some practical matters, such as the assistance the Russian Orthodox Church can render in painting murals in the church.

The visit of the church delegation from Russia was widely covered by the North Korean mass media.

DECR Communication Service

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