



## Thanksgiving to St Nicholas of Japan celebrated in Kyoto to mark 40th anniversary of his canonization

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On October 11, 2010, a solemn thanksgiving to St Nicholas of Japan, Equal-to-the-Apostles, was held at the Church of the Annunciation in Kyoto, Japan. It was led by Metropolitan Daniel of All Japan.

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Among the worshippers was an official delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, who came to Japan with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia for the celebrations devoted to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St Nicholas's canonization and the 40<sup>th</sup> of the autonomy of the Japanese Orthodox Church. The delegation is led by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations. It includes Archbishop Feognost of Sergiev Posav, Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman, and others. Taking part in the common prayer were also Bishop Seraphim of Sendai and Archpriest Ioann Nagaya of the Russian Orthodox Church Representation in Tokyo.

The Cathedral of the Annunciation was built during St Nicholas's lifetime. It is the only church in Japan to preserve an altar consecrated by the saint himself. To this day, there is the Holy Gospel lying on the altar, which was given to the parish by St John of Kronstadt and inscribed by St. Nicholas.

After the service, the Primate of the Japanese Orthodox Church greeted the high delegation. He reminded the congregation that 11 years ago, the late Patriarch Alexy II, during his visit to Japan, visited Kyoto and celebrated a thanksgiving at the Church of the Annunciation, which has been the center of the Western Diocese of the Japanese Orthodox Church for many years.

Metropolitan Hilarion, in his response, stressed that Orthodox faith was not a product of some foreign influence. On the contrary, this faith became the flesh and blood of today's Orthodox Japanese. 'You have adopted the Orthodox faith from your ancestors, who received witness to the Christian truth from St. Nicholas, have preserved it and handed over to you', he said.

'The Orthodox liturgy is celebrated throughout Japan today in the mother tongue of the faithful, and thousands of people come to salvation thanks to the Orthodox faith', he added. His Eminence also called the congregation to continue preserving and multiplying the fruits of the gospel's preaching of St Nicholas Equal-to-the-Apostles, saying, 'Preserve the Orthodox faith, hand it over to your children and grandchildren because it is the faith which opens to people the true meaning of life'.

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