



## **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia visits Monastery of the Dormition in Odessa**

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On 20 July 2010, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill completed his daily programme with a visit to the Monastery of the Dormition.

He was met at the holy gates by Bishop Aleksi of Belgorod-Dnestrovsky, abbot of the monastery, with the brethren; abbots of the diocesan monasteries. Mother superiors of the diocesan convents, and students of the Odessa theological seminary.

Arriving in the monastery together with His Holiness were His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine, Metropolitan Agafangel of Odessa and Izmail, other Ukrainian hierarchs, and members of the official delegation accompanying His Holiness on his visit to Ukraine.

Bishop Aleksi of Belgorod-Dnestrovsky, abbot of the monastery, greeted His Holiness the Patriarch at the Cathedral of the 'Life-Giving Font' Icon of the Heavenly Queen and presented him with the omophorion, stole, and cuffs on behalf of the monks and parishioners.

His Holiness addressed the archpastors, pastors, monks, nuns, and laymen, saying:

"Your Beatitude! Your Eminences! Your Graces! Abbot of the monastery, dear fathers, brothers, and sisters!

"While entering the sacred patriarchal abode of the Dormition in Odessa, I am happy and deeply moved. For a long time, Patriarchs of Moscow had had no opportunity to come here to spend some time with the brethren and have a short rest within this historical residence.

"I would like to cordially thank you, Your Beatitude and Your Eminence for an opportunity to pay this visit. Many things in the life of our Church in Ukraine and in the life of Ukrainian society have changed for the better. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the historical Church of the Ukrainian people, has played a great part in the stabilization of life of the Ukrainian people and in upholding their unity.

"Monks have performed their deed of acquiring the Holy Spirit for many years in this monastery. This is a special deed of struggle with oneself, with one's sins and passions, and with the weakening influence of human emotions. The strength of the monasteries and the meaning of monastic life lie in the life

according to the law of God. Certainly, it is impossible to always observe this law, and monks sin, being weak sometimes, but there is the most important thing in their life – their devotion to God, doing His will through their vow of obedience, being chaste. The strength of monastic deed spreads throughout the world.

"The venerable elder Kuksha, a miracle-worker of Odessa, now canonized, lived the last years of his earthly life here. Any time we came to the monastery, we went to the cemetery to pray at the modest tomb of Father Kuksha. We understood that this man had lived an unusual life and was holy before God. It is wonderful that now we can ask the saint of God for intercession and prayers for this monastery, the city of Odessa, and our entire Church.

"I would like to cordially thank you, Your Eminence, for great labours of the last years. I have not recognized the monastery, as many new buildings have appeared, and it has become even more beautiful.

"Yet the most wonderful thing is another place of common prayer, a light of piety in Odessa, this cathedral of the Holy Monastery of the Dormition. I wish you, Your Eminence Aleksiy, your close associate, the brethren and all the believers God's help in your life and ministry. Draw gracious strength from the monastery and from real experience of life with God and in accordance with the law of God. The Lord will keep all who are faithful to Him, who love the Church and come closer to Him through participation in the life of the Church."

His Holiness donated an Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God to the cathedral. All worshippers were given small icons of the Mother of God of Kasperovo with patriarchal blessing. "Keep this icon and remember the Patriarch in your prayers, as he needs them. May God's blessing be with you!", His Holiness said in conclusion.