His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople completes his visit to the Russian Orthodox Church

[gallery]
On 31 May 2010, His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople completed his visit to the Russian Orthodox Church. During his ten-day visit the Primate of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople visited Moscow, St. Petersburg, the Valamo Island, and Kronstadt. His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew and His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Laura of the Holy Trinity on Pentecost. They celebrated at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow on the commemoration day of Ss. Cyril and Methodius Equal-to-the-Apostles. That same day Patriarch Bartholomew attended the opening of the Days of Slavonic Literature and Culture. During his visit, Patriarch Bartholomew met with the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, visited the churches in Moscow, including the representations of the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem.

The Primate of the Church of Constantinople venerated the precious relics of the founders of the Valamo Monastery, Ss. Sergius and Herman, and the holy sites of the monastery. He also visited the scetes of the Valamo Monastery of the Transfiguration.

While in Kronstadt, he visited the Naval Cathedral of St. Nicholas and met with the wife of the Russian President Ms. Svetlana Medvedeva, who is a member of the guardianship board of the Cathedral.

During his stay in St. Petersburg, His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew visited the Hermitage, the Cathedral of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God, the Cathedral of the Saviour-on-the-Blood, and the Laura of St. Alexander Nevsky. Together with Patriarch Kirill he visited the Nikolsky cemetery of the Laura and prayed at the tomb of Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov) of Leningrad and Novgorod, as well at the tombs of Dostoevsky and Tchaikovsky.

On the Sunday of All Saints, His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia celebrated the Divine Liturgy at St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg. After the divine service they visited the historical building of the Holy Governing Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill gave a reception in honour of His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew at St. Catherine's Palace in Tsarskoye Selo.

The Primate of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople was accompanied by the delegation consisting

of Metropolitans Michael of Austria, Irinaios of Myriophyton and Peristasis, Emmanuel of France, general secretary of the Holy Synod archimandrite Elphidophoros (Lambriniadis), archimandrite Bessarion (Komzias), archdeacon Maximos (Vgenopoulos), and other persons.

In the morning of 31 May 2010, His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew left St. Petersburg for Istanbul. He was seen off at "Pulkovo" airport by the rector of the St. Petersburg Theological schools Bishop Amvrosiy of Gatchina; head of the Moscow Patriarchate's administrative secretariat Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk; abbot of the Laura of St. Alexander Nevsky Bishop Nazary of Vyborg; deputy head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations archpriest Nikolai Balashov; DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations Rev. Igor Yakimchuk; vice-governor of St. Petersburg A. Vakhmistrov, and clergymen of the St. Petersburg diocese, as well as by consul general of the Republic of Greece in St. Petersburg Ms. A. Katzourou, consul general of the Republic of Cyprus in St. Petersburg A. Sammoutis, and consul general of the Republic of Turkey in St. Petersburg M. Chinar.

In conclusion of his visit, the Primate of the Church of Constantinople addressed the journalists:

"Our visit to Russia that gives birth to the saints, is successfully completed with God's help. This was a reciprocal visit to the peaceful and fraternal visit of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to the Ecumenical Patriarchate last year. We are leaving for our Mother Church, for Constantinople with good reminiscences and sacred feelings.

"We could proclaim for the hundredth time our indissoluble unity and profound love not only between the two Churches, but also between their Primates. We have known His Holiness Patriarch Kirill from his youth and appreciated his talents granted to him by God. We know his love and devotion to the Church and the pious Russian people. We are sure that we shall cooperate in harmony to overcome the current problems in Orthodoxy at the future Holy and Great Council so that the Local Autocephalous Church could give a convincing answer to humanity suffering from a profound crisis. This answer will be based on the Gospel love, humility in Christ, unity in the Holy Spirit, and hope on God the Father.

After Russia had received the holy baptism and the Gospel from Constantinople, it has given to the Church many saints, confessors, wise in God hierarchs, and new martyrs who are its wondrous crown and eternal glory. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and church authorities continue to educate people in Christ. Monasticism is flourishing, churches are filled with believers, and the word of God reaches the most distant corners of the large country. The wounds inflicted by the long night of militant atheism have been healed. Crosses are shining not only on the churches and at home and even in governmental institutions, but also in the hearts and everyday life of the majority of people, this being the main thing. We have seen it with our own eyes. Indeed, "the right hand of the Most High has changed" (Ps. 77:10).

While thanking our dear brother Kirill, venerable holy authorities and members of the church administration, we consider it our duty to express our gratitude to the Russian state authorities for respect shown to us and members of our delegation, respect that is addressed to the Holy Apostolic and Ecumenical Throne of Constantinople, too."

His Holiness thanked the believers of the Russian Church who greeted him, prayed at divine services and asked for his blessing.

Patriarch Bartholomew added:

"Stay in the love of the Holy God in the Trinity under the holy intercession of the Mother of God, being united by the Holy Mysteries and chastity in the Body of Christ! Do not listen to the voices alien to the voice of the Gospel. Be obedient in faith to your Patriarch and your pastors. May peace reign in you and in your relations with all who sincerely love the Lord Jesus. We ardently pray for you in the holy tabernacle of Phanar. We love you sincerely and profoundly! From the bottom of our heart and soul we love you all – clergymen, rulers, and people! You are the bone of our bone and the flesh of our flesh. Pray for us, too, and the heavens will respond to your prayers.

"We are departing from here in body, but not in the spirit. We are leaving you in God's love to people. Rejoice, ye brothers! Rejoice, ye children! Rejoice, ye friends! Rejoice, ye all! Always rejoice in the Lord! And again I say: "Rejoice! Mend your ways, take our appeal to heart, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you" (2 Cor. 13:11).

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/57159/