



## **Primate of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople venerates relics in the Moscow Kremlin cathedrals**

On 25 May 2010, the delegation of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople led by His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew visited the Moscow Kremlin. The delegation consists of Metropolitans Michael of Austria, Irinaios of Myriophyton and Peristasis and Emmanuel of France, general secretary of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople archimandrite Elphidophoros (Lambriniadis), archimandrite Bessarion (Komzias), archdeacon Maximos (Vgenopoulos), and others.

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations accompanied His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew.

The delegation was met at the Cathedral Square by Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administrative Secretariat; archpriest Vladimir Divakov, Moscow secretary of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and dean of the Central district of Moscow; DECR deputy chairman archpriest Nikolai Balashov; DECR secretary for Inter-Orthodox relations Rev. Igor Yakimchuk; and protodeacon Vladimir Nazarkin, assistant to the DECR chairman. Archpriest Vyacheslav Shestakov, sacristan of the Moscow Kremlin cathedrals, was present at the visit.

Bells of the 'Ivan the Great' bell-tower were ringing during the visit.

The troparion to the Dormition of the Mother of God was sung at the Cathedral of the Dormition. Patriarch Bartholomew venerated the relics of St. Peter, looked at the frescoes and old icons. Also venerated were the relics of Ss. Philipp, Alexis, Hermogen and Jonah of Moscow. Magnification in the Slavonic language was sung at the tomb of St. Hermogen.

Members of the delegation saw the Patriarch's throne and the Tsar's throne of the 16<sup>th</sup> century with a carved wooden depiction of the translations of tsar's regalia from Constantinople to Russia.

His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew paid a special attention to the icon of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker and the Halkopratia icon of the Mother of God painted by a great artist in the 14<sup>th</sup> century as well as to the ancient iconostasis of the church and the "The Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Chonae" icon that dates back to the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The guests saw the burial-vault of the Patriarch of Moscow with the tomb of Patriarch Hadrian (+1700),

the last Primate of the Russian Church buried in the Cathedral of the Dormition.

The bells ringing, the guests proceeded to the Cathedral of the Archangel where they sang Troparion to the Heavenly Powers in the Greek language. The Primate of the Church of Constantinople saw the sanctuary frescoes depicting the first hierarchs of Moscow.

His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew saw the tombs of the Tsar Ivan IV and his sons Ioann and Feodor and venerated the relics of the martyr Michael, Prince of Chernigov.

The delegation visited the Cathedral of the Annunciation that used to be a domestic church of the Moscow tsars till the 18<sup>th</sup> century and proceeded to the Kremlin Palace. They visited the Chamber of the Facets, frescoes, and five ceremonial halls named after Russian Orders. Photo was taken of the delegation at the Throne Hall.

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