



## **The first group of Russian Orthodox pilgrims is back from Turkey**

The development of pilgrimage of Christian holy places in Turkey was one of the themes discussed by Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia during his first official visit to the Church of Constantinople. The recent trip of 71 Russian Orthodox pilgrims to Turkey was a follow-up of an agreement reached during that visit.

The pilgrims from various cities in Russia were led by Bishop Mark of Yegoryevsk, Moscow Patriarchate secretary of the Russian Orthodox institutions abroad. On Dec. 16, Patriarch Bartholomew said a thanksgiving together with the Moscow Patriarchate clergy at the Cathedral Church of St. George.

On Dec. 19, Bishop Mark celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of St. Nicholas of Myra in Lycia. Among the worshippers were Russians who reside in Turkey.

The group also visited Ephesus and Kusadasi.

Now pilgrimages of groups consisting of clergy and laity of the Russian Orthodox Church and celebrations at the old Byzantine holy places will become a regular feature.

*DECR Communications Service*