Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Slutsk visits France

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Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, visited France on November 27 to December 4, 2009. He arrived in Lyon at the invitation of the Primate of the Catholic Church in France, archbishop Philippe Barbarin, the official portal of the Belarus Orthodox Church reports.

On November 27, Metropolitan Philaret met with Cardinal Philippe Barbarin at the Church of St. John the Baptist. He thanked the Primate of France for the invitation to visit the ancient see of Lyon and for an opportunity to visit historic sites sanctified by the deeds of early Christian martyrs.

The next day Metropolitan Philaret visited the burial place of hieromartyr Irenaeus of Lyon and venerated the relics of the holy martyrs who suffered in Lyon.

In the evening the Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus delivered a report at the Catholic University of Lyon.

On November 29, Metropolitan Philaret celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the Church of St. Charles together with Archbishop Innokenty of Korsun and clergymen of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. After the service Metropolitan Philaret greeted the participants in the celebration of the 85th anniversary of the Orthodox community in Lyon and presented a "Protecting Veil" Icon of the Mother of God to the church.

On November 30, Metropolitan Philaret visited the Serf Publishers, where he discussed the prospects of their cooperation with the Byelorussian Orthodox Church in translation of the works of the Holy Fathers into Russian.

On December 4, the feast day of the Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Mother of God, Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Slutsk celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Three Hierarchs metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church in Paris.

He presented Archbishop Innokenty with an icon of the Synaxis of the Byelorussian Saints and silver coins depicting the saints. Addressing the worshippers, he underscored a special importance of the Paris metochion in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church and called them to cherish the memory of the founders and all who worked and prayed at the metochion.

Before his departure for Minsk, Metropolitan Philaret visited the Saint-Genevieve-de-Bois Russian cemetery and celebrated the funeral litiya for all buried there.

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