Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk presided over patronal festivities at the Gorneye Convent in Jerusalem



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On November 4, the day of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God particularly venerated by the Gorneye Convent in Jerusalem, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, who is in the Holy Land with a blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of All the Saints Who Shone Forth in the Russian Land - the main church of the convent.

His concelebrants included Archimandrite Alexander (Yelisov), head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem; Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, an adviser to the Patriarch of Moscow and All

Russia; Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR acting vice-chairman; Rev. Alexander Ershov, assistant to the DECR chairman; Hieromonk Amvrosy (Ignatov), sacristan of the Mission's Metochion of the Holy Forefathers in Hebron; Archpriest Nikolay Zhdanov, acting sacristan of the Mission's Metochion of St. Tabitha in Jaffa; Hieromonk Innokenty (Bespalov), a cleric at the Gorneye Convent; Rev. Victor Klinshov, a cleric of the Diocese of Vyksa; members of the Mission - Hegumen Nikon (Golovko), Hieromonk Dometian (Markarian) and Hieromonk Afanasy (Bukin); Archdeacon Mark (Henderson), patriarchal deacon of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem; as well as pilgrims in holy orders.

Among the worshippers were Sister Ekaterina (Chernysheva), abbess of the Gorneye Convent, with sisters; and E. I. Skopenko, executive director of the Foundation for Support of Christian Culture and Heritage; Yu. A. Romashuk, administrator of the Mission's Pilgrim's Residence in Bethlehem, numerous parishioners, pilgrims and guests of the convent.

After the liturgy, the praise to the Most Holy Theotokos was lifted up. Then Metropolitan Anthony and Archimandrite Alexander exchanges greetings followed by the singing of Many Years of Life.

Then a procession of clergy and sisters with singing the hymn of the feast proceeded to the Church of Our Lady of Kazan in which all the worshippers bowed before the locally venerated Kazan Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God.

After the convent's common meal, Metropolitan Anthony said the lity at the grave of Mother Superior Georgia (Shchukina), 1931-2011) and visited her cell cherished by Gorneye sisters in memory of their late mother superior.

The history of the special veneration for the Kazan Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos in Gorneye Convent in Ain-Karem goes back to 1916 when a cholera pandemic raged through the Holy Land. Without any chance to receive earthly help, the sisters lifted up prayers to the Heavenly Queen, reading over and over the akathistos to the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God till the disease ceased. Since that time, the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God, before which they prayers, has been a specially venerated icon.

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