



## Metropolitan of Volokolamsk Anthony visits monasteries in the Kazan diocese.



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On 25<sup>th</sup> November the metropolitan of Volokolamsk Anthony visited the monastery of Our Lady of Kazan. The chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate was accompanied by the metropolitan of Kazan and Tatarstan Kirill, deputy chairman of the DECR archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), aide to the chairman of the DECR Father Alexander Yershov and the secretary of the metropolitanate of Tatarstan hieromonk Kirill (Korytko).

Metropolitan Anthony and metropolitan Kirill laid flowers at the grave of metropolitan Theophan (Ashurkov, +2020), the former head of the metropolitanate of Tatarstan. At one time he was a deputy chairman of the DECR. The clergy sang 'Eternal Memory' for the ever-memorable archpastor.

Then metropolitan Kirill arranged an excursion for the chairman of the DECR of the Cathedral of Our

Lady of Kazan. The ruling bishop noted that this splendid church was restored on the site of the invention of the Kazan icon of the Mother of God by decree of the president of the Republic of Tatarstan Rustam Minnikhanov with the support of state councilor of Tatarstan Mintimer Shaimiev and the republic's Foundation for the Rebirth of Historical and Cultural Monuments which he headed. In 2016 His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia laid the foundation stone of the cathedral, and in 2021 headed the office for the great consecration of the restored church.

Metropolitan Anthony visited the cave church consecrated to the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God. Then the archpastor venerated the site of the invention of the icon of the Most of God, viewed the museum exhibits dedicated to the history of the Kazan icon and the monastery, and paid homage to the reliquary containing a particle of the relics of the venerable martyr the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, who attended to the cave church's adornment in her lifetime.

In the upper church the archpastor paid homage to venerated copy of the Kazan icon of the Mother of God and the case which adorned the newly-manifested image of the Virgin Mary.

During his visit to the monastery of Our Lady of Kazan metropolitan Anthony visited the museum of the Kazan diocese. The excursion was given by hieromonk Arkady (Loginov). The archpastor gave a positive evaluation to the exhibition and the historical material on display. In his comments after viewing metropolitan Anthony wrote: "It is with great interest that I became acquainted with the exhibits of the museum of the Kazan diocese and with the material testimony to the rich history of Orthodoxy in the God-protected land of Tatarstan. May the Lord bless the labours of those who work in the museum, through whom grateful visitors have the opportunity to come into contact with the heritage of the Russian Orthodox Church in these grace-filled regions."

On the same day metropolitan Anthony, accompanied by metropolitan Kirill, visited the island city of Sviyazhsk. Here the chairman of the DECR visited the monastery of the Dormition of Our Lady and the convent of Saint John the Baptist. The monastery ensemble, which has a special historical and architectural value, was restored by the Renaissance Foundation. The monastery of the Dormition, which celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its revival, is the cradle of Orthodoxy for the Kazan and Volga region. In 2019 it was included in UNESCO's world heritage list.

Metropolitan Anthony visited the oldest churches of the monastery – the Dormition Cathedral (1561) and the refectory Church of Saint Nicholas (1556) with its forty-three-meter-high bell-tower. In the Dormition Cathedral metropolitan Anthony viewed frescoes painted around 1605. In the Church of Saint Nicholas, the bishops and accompanying clergy venerated the shrine with relics of the founder of the Sviyazhsk monastery Saint Herman of Kazan. The guests also visited the Tatarskaya slobodka archeological tree museum, as reported by the site of the Kazan diocese.

Metropolitan Anthony was in Kazan to attend the Religious Polyphony and National Unity conference organized by the Valdai international discussion club.

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