DECR Chairman visits the memorial in Shipka Pass



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On December 7, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, who is on a working visit to Bulgaria with a blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, visited Shipka Pass, where fierce battles were held during the 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish War between Russian troops supported by Bulgarian volunteer corps and troops of the Ottoman Empire.

In the Monastery of the Nativity of Christ at the bottom of the pass, Metropolitan Anthony was met by the abbot of the monastery, Hegumen Pankraty (Buzov), who introduced him to the history of the monastery and the Memorial Church of the same name, which was erected in 1885-1902 in memory of the Russian and Bulgarian solders who fell in action in Shipka and in battles near the cities of Kazanlak

and Stara-Zagora. The interior of the church is decorated with memorial plates bearing names of troops that participated in the battles, names of the Russian Army soldiers and officers as well as those of members of the Bulgarian volunteer corps. The remains of the heroes lie in rest in sarcophagi in the crypt of the church.

The DECR chairman said the lity for the repose of the souls of Russian soldiers and Bulgarian volunteers who were killed in action for the liberation of Bulgaria.

The archpastor also came to the Russian cemetery near the church and made a tour of the monastery buildings.

On the same day, Metropolitan Anthony familiarized himself with the town of Kazanlak, visiting in particular the Convent of the Entrance of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple.

Metropolitan Anthony is accompanied during his trip by Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, acting DECR vice-chairman, Archimandrite Vassian (Zmeyev), rector of the Sofia Representation of the Russian Orthodox Church, and Rev. Alexander Yershov, assistant to the DECR chairman.

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