His Holiness Patriarch Kirill visits the Church of St. Abraham of Bolgar



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On May 20, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', who is paying his primatial visit to Tatarstan metropolia, came to the church of St. Abraham of Bolgar, Spassky district, Republic of Tatarstan.

Coming to the church with His Holiness were Metropolitan Kirill of Kazan and Tatarstan; Metropolitan Dionisiy of Voskresensk, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Mr. Vladimir Legoida, chairman of the Synodal Department for Church's Relations with Society and Mass Media; and other members of the delegation.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church and his suite were met by Bishop Pakhomiy of Chistopol and Nizhnekamsk; Rev. Viktor Tikhonov, secretary of the Diocese of Chistopol; Archpriest Andrei Zinkov, dean of the Spassky church district; Rev Sergiy Pavlov, rector of the church of St. Abraham of Bolgar; deans and other clergymen of the Diocese of Chistopol; and many parishioners.

Also present was Mr. Fargat V. Mukhametov, head of the Spassky municipal district.

Patriarch Kirill was met at the entrance to the church by children attending Sunday school. Each of them presented His Holiness with a white rose, Patriarchal press service reports.

His Holiness blessed the children and proceeded to the church where he venerated the shrine with a finger of St. Abraham of Bolgar.

Bishop Pakhomiy welcomed His Holiness and presented him with an icon of the Kazan Mother of God.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill addressed those gathered, saying that he was happy to pray with them and feel the adamant faith of Orthodox Christians living here. He continued to say: “We have been keeping our faith and are going to church, and it is indeed a miracle of God. The whole history of Russian Orthodoxy is a miracle of God, as no other Local Church had endured so many trials. The atheist government had intended to do away with any religion, Orthodoxy in the first place. I belong to the generation which faced the ordeal in the early 1960s. The leader of our country – I would not even mention his name – promised to build communism by 1980 and began with eradicating religious beliefs. But our generation has confronted this challenge and passed our Orthodox faith to the next generations.

“We should always learn from the past. Our recent history teaches us that faith and faithfulness to the Church are stronger than anything else. This is a powerful force which no enemy can overcome, because God is with us and there is no god with enemies. We should live with this feeling and remember that the Lord is with us and no one can take us away from Him except ourselves. We go wrong and commit a sin if we abandon God and stop going to church, if we do not raise our children in faith thinking that they will grow up and decide for themselves. No, we must bring them to church, read the Holy Scriptures with them, thus becoming firm in faith and perceiving the words of God in our heart and mind.

“I wish you to keep the Orthodox faith and our wonderful national traditions because our culture is imbued with Orthodoxy and is a part of our common spiritual heritage.

“May the Lord keep this holy place and each of you, helping you grow stronger spiritually and physically and your children stronger in their spiritual life as they will live after us and go to Orthodox churches,

pray to God, take Holy Communion and raise their own children in the same vein.

“Once again, I wholeheartedly greet you on this wonderful sunny day and invoke God’s blessing on you. May the Lord keep you safe!”

His Holiness presented an icon of the Mother of God and an Easter egg to the church. Small icons of the Saviour with Patriarchal blessing were given to the faithful.

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The wooden Trinity church was originally located in the village of Porfirovka, Spassky district. In 1988 the village had ceased to exist and the church was moved to Bolgar and consecrated in the name of the martyr Abraham, a miracle-worker of Bolgar.

In September 2002, clergymen and monastics from different parishes of the Diocese of Kazan celebrated here the first Liturgy in the Kryashen language, St. Abraham’ mother tongue.

In 2008, there were built a chapel, a house for monastics, and a two-storey side altar that houses also a baptistery, premises for Sunday school and Publications office. The monument to St. Abraham was unveiled and a spring on the site of his martyrdom was cleaned.

An object of special veneration in the church is the shrine with a finger of St. Abraham of Bolgar.

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