

## **Bishop Matthew of Sourozh took part in the opening of the diocesan exhibition of children's drawings "We draw flowers"**



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On Sunday, November 5, 2023, after the Divine Liturgy at the Dormition Cathedral in London, His Grace Bishop Matthew of Sourozh took part in the opening of the exhibition of children's drawings "We Draw Flowers," dedicated to the 159th anniversary of the birth of the Holy Martyr Grand Duchess Elizaveta Feodorovna.

The exhibition presents works by students of parochial schools of the Sourozh diocese from London, Dublin, Glasgow, Manchester and Nottingham. The exhibition also presents drawings by students of secular Russian schools: "Fairy Tale" (London), "Rainbow" (London), "Knowledge" (London), "Istok" (Reading), and the art studio "Drawing Together".

Opening the exhibition, Bishop Matthew spoke about the importance of venerating the saints in the life of every Christian and drew attention to the fact that the Holy Martyr Elizabeth is especially close to Orthodox believers living in Great Britain. After the untimely death of Princess Alice, the daughter of Queen Victoria of Great Britain and the mother of Grand Duchess Elizaveta Feodorovna, the future saint was raised for 6 years in Great Britain, mainly living in Osborne House Palace, Queen Victoria's summer seaside residence in the town of East Cowes on the northern coast of the Isle of Wight.

E.N. Poplavskaya, Director of the parochial school at the Dormition Cathedral in London, said that flowers occupied a special place in St.Elizabeth' life. From childhood, her parents taught the young Princess Ella (that was her name in the family) and her sisters and brothers to deeds of mercy. Every Saturday, the children visited the sick in hospitals. Ella always came with bouquets of flowers, knowing that they could ease the suffering of the sick and bring joy to them.

On May 20, 1901, while in Russia, Grand Duchess Elizaveta Feodorovna organized a flower festival, for the first time in Moscow, which showed her high artistic taste and desire to fill the world with beauty and harmony. The festival was not just a wonderful event giving the opportunity to contemplate the beauty of God's world, but also allowed to raise substantial funds for charitable needs.

Flower Day caused a lively response among the population and began to be held at least four times a year. The most popular White Flower Day in pre-revolutionary Russia was aimed at fighting tuberculosis. Pink Flower Day was dedicated to the fight against child mortality. Purple Flower Day called for assistance in providing cheap and free housing to the poor.

In this regard, it is no coincidence that flowers were chosen as the theme of the diocesan exhibition of children's drawings in order to remind participants and guests of the works of mercy that every Christian is called to perform.

The exhibition is open in the library of the Dormition Cathedral and will last until December 4. Admission is free.