



Russian Church representatives convey Christmas greetings to Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem



DECR Communication Service, 09/01/2024

On January 8, the head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, Archimandrite Vassian (Zmeyev), together with staff members of the Mission – Hegumen Nikon (Golovko) and Deacon Makary Petukhov, as well as Mother Superior Yekaterina (Chernyshova) and nuns of the Gorny Convent in Ein Kerem, attended an annual Christmas reception held in the Grand Throne Hall of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

The reception was hosted by His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem, Press Service of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission **reports**.

Earlier that day, Archimandrite Vassian (Zmeyev) **visited the Church of Saints Constantine and**

Helen, Equal-to-the-Apostles, where he prayed at the Divine Liturgy together with His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos.

Among those who attended the reception were hierarchs of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem, ordained members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre and representatives of the community of Greek- and Arabic-speaking Christians in Jerusalem.

A choir of the Sretenskaya Theological Seminary graduates opened the reception by performing Christmas hymns and carols.

The head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission conveyed to His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos Christmas greetings from **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus'** and **Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations**.

In addition, Archimandrite Vassian extended Christmas greetings to His Beatitude on behalf of the clergy of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission and the abbess and sisters of the Gorny Convent.

As the head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission noted in his address, God became man and was born in the Bethlehem cave as an ordinary humble person; the Pre-Eternal God became man so that man might inherit everlasting life in the Kingdom of God the Father, which is a great gift of the Divine love. "We are undergoing hard times, when we all need love and accord in order to overcome enmity among nations and restore peace and tranquility in our hearts and in our homes," he said.

Archimandrite Vassian wished to His Beatitude help from God in his Primatial ministry for the good of the Orthodox Church. He also wished peace to the Holy Land so that prayers of angelic glorification may be offered in its churches and monasteries and the clergy and laity of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem may serve in peace in that blessed land.

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos offered reciprocal felicitations to Archimandrite Vassian on the Feast of the Nativity of Christ and noted that Christians in the Holy Land are witnesses of the Divine Incarnation to have taken place; through their service they continue to bring the glad tidings of the Saviour's coming into the world. As His Beatitude reminded all those present, the Church of Christ has been suffering various tribulations over the centuries, which nowadays take the form of attacks by, among others, globalists and hosts of darkness; yet Christ has always been the source of hope for believers, whose weapons are prayer and trust in Him. Patriarch Theophilos emphasized the importance of unity of the Church and pointed out that the Church is one and the time will come when peace is restored.

His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos asked the head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission to convey Christmas greetings to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', as well as his felicitations and wishes of God's help to President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, who renders assistance in preserving Christian presence in the Holy Land.

Archimandrite Vassian also introduced to Patriarch Theophilos a new cleric of the Mission – Priest Viktor Klinshov, who will be performing his pastoral service at the Gorny Convent with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus'.

Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/91219/>