



DECR chairman visits Archdiocese of Mount Lebanon



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On 9th March 2024, while in Lebanon with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, visited the Metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church in Beirut.

Metropolitan Anthony was accompanied by Metropolitan Silouan of Byblos, Botris and Dependencies (Mount Lebanon); Metropolitan Nifon of Philippopolis, representative of the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'; Mr Alexander Rudakov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Lebanon; Archimandrite Philip (Vasiltsev), representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' to the Patriarch of Antioch and All

the East; Archimandrite Seraphim (Shemyatovsky), rector of the Moscow Metochion of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia; Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR deputy chairman; Deacon Nikolai Vasin, secretary to the DECR chairman; and Mr Yegor Skopenko, executive director of the Foundation for the Support of Christian Culture and Heritage.

That same day later the DECR chairman visited the Archdiocese of Mount Lebanon and had a meeting with its ruling hierarchy, Metropolitan Silouan of Byblos, Botris and Dependencies (Mount Lebanon).

They were joined by Metropolitan Nifon of Philippiopolis, representative of the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'; Mr Alexander Rudakov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Lebanon; Archimandrite Philip (Vasiltsev), representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' to the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East; Archimandrite Seraphim (Shemyatovsky), rector of the Moscow Metochion of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia; Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR deputy chairman; Deacon Nikolai Vasin, secretary to the DECR chairman; and Mr Yegor Skopenko, executive director of the Foundation for the Support of Christian Culture and Heritage.

Greeting the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Silouan noted with satisfaction that the Patriarchates of Antioch and Moscow maintain a high level of bilateral relations. He also said that through their joint efforts the two Churches build up, uphold and strengthen the Orthodox unity, as evidenced by the lesser consecration of the Holy Annunciation Church in Jal El Dib due to be celebrated the next day. The church in Jal El Dib is a **place of worship** for the Russian-speaking Orthodox Christians in Lebanon.

Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk warmly thanked Metropolitan Silouan for his hospitality and for the opportunity to meet and pray together, as well as for the care he shows to the Russian-speaking members of his flock. As the DECR chairman pointed out, it is very important to everyone living far from their homeland to have a place where they could pray, go to confessions, partake of the Holy Mysteries of Christ and talk to people of the same faith in their native language, and now the Russian-speaking residents of Lebanon have found such a place – their spiritual home – thanks to Metropolitan Silouan's paternal care.

The meeting was followed by a dinner given by Metropolitan Silouan of Mount Lebanon in honour of the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church.