



## Meeting of the DECR Chairman with His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem took place



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On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2024, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', arrived on a working visit to the Holy Land.

He is accompanied on the trip by Archpriest Nikolai Balashov, Advisor to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus', Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, Deputy Chairman of the DECR, and Deacon Nikolai Vasin, Secretary to the DECR Chairman.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, Metropolitan Anthony and his entourage were received at his residence by His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilus III of the Holy City of Jerusalem and All Palestine. The meeting was also attended by Archbishop Aristarchus of Constantine, Archbishop Isikhios of Capitolas, and Archimandrite Vassian (Zmeyev), head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem.

In the course of a warm and friendly conversation, views were exchanged on topical issues on today's agenda. His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilus shared his deep concern about the continuing armed confrontation in the land of Palestine, which tragically affects the daily lives of local Christians. Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk assured His Beatitude that the Russian Orthodox Church fervently prays for peace in the Holy Land and for the Christian presence there to be preserved and strengthened.

The interlocutors also touched upon the topics of interreligious dialogue, inter-confessional and inter-Orthodox relations.

His Beatitude assured of his assiduous prayers at the Holy Sepulchre for the Russian people, for the Russian Orthodox Church and its Primate, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus'.

For his services to the Jerusalem Orthodox Church, His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilus honoured Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk with the highest award of the Jerusalem Patriarchate - the cross and star of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, and wished the hierarch strength from the Risen Lord in continuing his difficult and responsible ministry at the head of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate.

In his turn, the Chairman of the DECR warmly thanked His Beatitude for the high award, as well as for his unfailing love for the Russian Church. Metropolitan Anthony noted the important consolidating role of the Patriarch of Jerusalem for all Christians of the Holy Land.

In memory of the meeting, Metropolitan Anthony presented His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilus with a holy panagia (encolpion).

On the same day, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk and his entourage visited the Church of Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, where they venerated the greatest shrines of the Christian world - the Life-bearing Holy Sepulchre and Golgotha, where Christ was crucified.