



## Head of Russian Ecclesiastical Mission concelebrates with Patriarch of Jerusalem on the Feast of Annunciation



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On 7<sup>th</sup> April 2024, Feast of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos, Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross, His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of the Holy City of Jerusalem and All Palestine officiated at the divine services in the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth.

Concelebrating with His Beatitude were the following hierarchs of the Church of Jerusalem: Metropolitan Kyriakos of Nazareth; Archbishop Damascene of Yaffo; Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, Secretary-General of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem; and Archbishop Methodios of Tabor.

Taking part in the Liturgy on behalf of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem were its head,

Archimandrite Vassian (Zmeyev), and Deacon Makary Petukhov.

The Liturgy was celebrated in the Greek, Arabic, Church Slavonic and Romanian languages. The Scripture lesson was read in Church Slavonic by Archimandrite Vassian (Zmeyev), website of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission **reports**.

Among those who attended the divine service were Mr Anatoly Viktorov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the State of Israel, and Mr Evgeny Vorobyev, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the State of Israel.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by an official reception. During the reception, Mr Anatoly Viktorov delivered a speech, in which he said in particular, “Russia strongly supports the efforts of His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem and All Palestine aimed at maintaining the Orthodox Christian presence and preserving the true spiritual heritage in the Holy Land.”

Having raised the sorrowful matter pertaining to the persecutions against the canonical Church in Ukraine, he added, “In fact, the policy of repression carried out by the Kyiv regime with the support of Western politicians has as its goal the destruction of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Mass seizures of churches are taking place, along with the coercive unlawful liquidation of communities under the guise of their seemingly voluntary transfers to another jurisdiction. A large-scale campaign has been launched against the clergymen of the canonical Church. Its purpose is to spread misinformation and discredit priests in the eyes of their flock.”

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