



Delegation of the Macedonian Orthodox Church visits Shrines of St. Petersburg and Valaam Monastery



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A delegation of the Macedonian Orthodox Church – Ohrid Archbishopric, visiting Russia at the invitation of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Rus', was in St. Petersburg and on Valaam from October 11 to 19, 2025.

The delegation consisted of Metropolitan Petar of Prespa and Pelagonia; Bishop Nikolaj of Velich, Vicar of the Prespa and Pelagonia Diocese; and Hieromonk Atanasij (Arsoski), Head of the Publishing Department of the Skopje Diocese.

On October 11, the representatives of the Macedonian Orthodox Church visited St. Isaac's Cathedral. With the blessing of the cathedral's keykeeper, Archpriest Roman Kovalsky, the guests were welcomed by a cleric of the cathedral, Priest Dionisy Prozorov. Father Dionisy spoke about the life of the parish and the youth activities developing within the walls of St. Isaac's Cathedral.

The delegation's program in the northern capital also included a visit to the Kazan Cathedral, where they were greeted by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Archpriest Alexander Pashkov, who spoke about the history of this shrine and the modern life of the cathedral community.

On October 13, a visit to the St. Petersburg Theological Academy took place.

On October 14, the delegation visited the church at the Smolensk Cemetery in the city on the Neva. With the blessing of the Dean of the Vasileostrovsky District, Archpriest Evgeny Shogenov, the guests were welcomed by Priest Sergei Ladanov. At the Church of the Smolensk Icon of the Mother of God, the guests were able to learn about the history and architecture of this majestic temple, one of the oldest and most revered in St. Petersburg.

The central moment of the visit was the visit to the Chapel of Blessed Xenia of St. Petersburg. The guests from the Macedonian Orthodox Church venerated the tomb of one of the most beloved and revered saints of the city on the Neva and offered their prayers to this holy servant of God.

Metropolitan Petar of Prespa and Pelagonia, Bishop Nikolaj of Velich, and Hieromonk Atanasij (Arsoski) also visited Kronstadt and the memorial apartment of St. John of Kronstadt.

On October 15, the delegation arrived on Valaam. Accompanied by Hieromonk Naum (Petkovski), a resident of the Valaam Monastery from Macedonia, and Danila Kolesnikov, a guide from the monastery's pilgrimage service, they visited the Transfiguration Cathedral, where they learned about the main shrines of the monastery and offered prayers before them.

After this, a fraternal meeting was held in a cordial atmosphere with Bishop Pankraty of Troitsk, Hegumen of the Transfiguration Stavropegial Valaam Monastery.

At his invitation, the guests proceeded to the Hegumen's Cemetery, where the hierarchs performed a memorial litya at the grave of the ever-memorable resident of the Valaam Monastery, Archimandrite Metodiye (Petrov), a native of North Macedonia.

The morning of October 16 began with a conciliar hierarchical Liturgy in the Church of Saints Cyril and Methodius at the "Slaviansky" pilgrim house, led by Metropolitan Petar in concelebration with Bishops

Pankraty and Nikolaj. During the service, at the augmented litany, the ever-memorable Archimandrite Metodije, through whose labors this church was built, as well as his parents, Kiril and Slobodka, were commemorated.

That same day, the guests followed the route of the Valaam "New Jerusalem," visiting the Resurrection and Gethsemane Sketes, and also toured the monastery farm complex.

On October 17, the delegation members visited the island sketes: St. Elijah's Skete, the Holy Island Skete, the St. John the Baptist Skete, and the Seraphim Hermitage.

The next day, after visiting the St. Vladimir and Kazan Sketes of the Valaam Monastery, they departed for St. Petersburg.

On Sunday, October 19, the representatives of the Macedonian Orthodox Church – Ohrid Archbishopric concelebrated the Liturgy with Metropolitan Varsonofy of St. Petersburg and Ladoga in the Prince Vladimir Cathedral of the northern capital. The service was held in the Dormition side-chapel.

A glorification was performed before the relics of Priest-Martyr Mikhail Sopyuzov, whose memory was celebrated on that day.

As a memento of the joint prayer, Metropolitan Varsonofy presented the hierarchs of the Macedonian Church with sculptures of the Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Prince Vladimir, the Baptizer of Rus'.

On October 20, the stay of the Macedonian delegation in Russia concluded.

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