Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk celebrates memorial service for departed members of DECR staff



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On 3rd April 2026, in the Holy Trinity Cathedral of St. Daniel's Stavropegic Monastery in Moscow, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, celebrated a memorial service for the departed members of the DECR staff.

The service was held on the eve of the 80th anniversary of the DECR's foundation. The Department was established by the decision of His Holiness Patriarch Alexy I of Moscow and All Rus' and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church on 4th April 1946.

As Metropolitan Anthony emphasized in his homily prior to the memorial service, the Department for External Church Relations "is not only the oldest Synodal institution of the Moscow Patriarchate, but also, which of the greatest importance, a close-knit team of workers who devote all their efforts, time

and health to this selfless service, protecting the interests of the Russian Orthodox Church in the sphere of external relations."

"Today we will commemorate by name all those who worked at our Department. We will remember them in a way befitting people of faith, because the most valuable memory of a person is the one expressed in prayer," the archpastor said, "Let us pray to our All-Generous Lord that He may look with favour on the selfless work carried out by our predecessors for the good of His Holy Church and make their memory eternal."

Concelebrating with Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk were: Archpriest Nikolai Balashov, advisor to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'; Archpriest Igor Vyzhanov, DECR deputy chairman; Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR deputy chairman; Hegumen Feofan (Lukyanov), head of the DECR Protocol; Archpriest Sergy Zvonarev, DECR secretary for far abroad countries; Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations; Priest Arseny Chernikin, head of the DECR Language Service; Priest Iliya Kosykh, head of the DECR Communication Service; Priest Iliya Kashitsyn, DECR secretary for interfaith relations; and Priest Andrei Titushkin of the DECR Secretariat for Far Abroad Countries.

In prayerful attendance were members of staff of the Department for External Church Relations.

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