



DECR Chairman takes part in patronal celebrations at Moscow Metochion of Orthodox Church of Antioch



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On 26th July 2026, the Moscow Metochion of the Orthodox Church of Antioch celebrated its patronal feast – the Synaxis of the Holy Archangel Gabriel.

The Divine Liturgy in the Church of the Archangel Gabriel was celebrated by Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate; Metropolitan Niphon of Philippopolis, Representative of the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus', Rector of the Metochion; Metropolitan Silouan of Byblos, Botrys and Dependencies (Mount Lebanon); and Metropolitan Antonios of Zahleh, Baalbek and Dependencies.

Concelebrating with the hierarchs were Archimandrite Philip (Vasiltsev), Representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' to the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East; Archimandrite Jeremiah

(Azzam), cleric of the Archdiocese of Zahleh and Baalbek; Archimandrite Chrysostomos (El Mecherki), Assistant Professor of St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology of the University of Balamand; and local clerics.

Among those in prayerful attendance was a group of students from the University of Balamand (Orthodox Church of Antioch) who had arrived in Russia the day before to attend the Summer Institute organized for them by the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate. As part of the Summer Institute, the students will visit theological schools, churches and monasteries of the Russian Orthodox Church. The delegation is led by Archimandrite Chrysostomos (El Mecherki), Assistant Professor of St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology of the University of Balamand.

During the Litany of Fervent Supplication, the Prayer for the Holy Rus' was read.

Some of the liturgical hymns were performed in the Arabic language by a student choir of the University of Balamand.

The Liturgy was followed by a moleben (prayer service) to the Archangel Gabriel, celebrated in the church courtyard.

Among those in attendance were representatives of the diplomatic missions of Albania, Algeria, the League of Arab States, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Chile, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, the European Union, Greece, Vatican, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, the Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Latvia, as well as officials of the Lebanese embassies in Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Mexico, Moldova, New Zealand, Pakistan, Palestine, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, Great Britain, the USA, and Yemen.

Present at the divine service was also Mr S.A. Gavrilov, Chair of the State Duma Committee on Ownership, Land and Property Relations.

After the prayer service, Metropolitan Niphon of Philippopolis addressed the participants in the celebrations, conveying to them warm wishes from His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch and All the East. Metropolitan Niphon also asked the DECR Chairman to convey his sincere gratitude to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' for his paternal attention to the Moscow Representation of the Church of Antioch.

As Metropolitan Niphon pointed out, the Russian and the Antiochian Orthodox Churches shared each other's joys and sorrows in the past and continue to do so in the present day, demonstrating unity in faith and love between the two nations.

As memorable gifts, His Eminence presented holy panagias to Metropolitan Anthony and the hierarchs of the Church of Antioch.

Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk conveyed to the participants in the celebrations greetings and blessings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' and noted a special important role of the Moscow Metochion of the Church of Antioch in strengthening ties between the two Patriarchates.

On behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, the DECR Chairman thanked Metropolitan Niphon for his decades-long fruitful service as Representative of the Patriarchate of Antioch and wished him good health, strength and help from God in his further ministry for the good of the Church of Christ. In commemoration of their joint prayer, Metropolitan Anthony presented to Metropolitan Niphon a holy panagia.

The DECR Chairman also extended greetings to Metropolitan Silouan of Mount Lebanon and Metropolitan Antonios of Zahleh and Baalbek.

The divine service was followed by a festive reception.

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