



Solovetsky monastery brotherhood choir gives concerts in Ethiopia



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From 22 to 27 September, the Brotherhood Choir of the Solovetsky Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Saviour, a stavropepic monastery for men, visited the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, taking part in celebrations marking the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of the Lord. Known in Ethiopia as “Meskel”, the feast is celebrated at the national level throughout the country.

On the evening of 26 September, on the eve of the All-Night Vigil for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, a musical procession dedicated to the feast took place in Addis Ababa’s central square, which is also named after the Cross (Meskel). The choir of the Solovetsky Monastery performed sacred hymns, including “God Is with Us” to the Solovetsky Monastery chant, the troparion of the Cross of the Lord, and “The Praises” of Great and Holy Saturday in a 19th-century chant setting.

Among the distinguished guests seated in the stands were His Holiness Patriarch Abune Matthias, Primate of the Ethiopian Church; His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, Primate of the Malankara Church of India, who was paying an official visit to the Ethiopian Church at the time; representatives of the Ethiopian state authorities and the diplomatic corps accredited in the country; hierarchs and clergy of the Ethiopian and Malankara Churches; and members of the Russian delegation who were in Addis Ababa to participate in the Days of Russian Spiritual Culture. The total number of spectators reached several tens of thousands. The performance by the Solovetsky Monastery Choir attracted widespread attention and was broadcast on Ethiopia's central television channels.

On the morning of 27 September, the Brotherhood Choir of the Solovetsky Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Saviour sang at the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of the Lord at the Russian House in Addis Ababa. The service was celebrated by Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), Secretary of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate for Inter-Christian Affairs.

Praying at the service were Hegumenia Elizabeth (Pozdnyakova), Abbess of the Marfo-Mariinsky Convent of Mercy in Moscow, and Russian compatriots residing in Ethiopia.

That evening, the Brotherhood Choir of the Solovetsky Monastery gave a concert in the assembly hall of the Russian Red Cross Hospital named after Dejazmach Balcha, a national hero of Ethiopia, which operates in Addis Ababa. The event was opened by V. V. Golovachev, Head of the Russian Centre for Science and Culture (Russian House) in Addis Ababa. Among those attending the concert were a representative of the Russian Embassy in Ethiopia, patients and staff of the hospital, Russian compatriots, and numerous Ethiopian guests.

The visit by the choir was organised with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Embassy of Russia in Ethiopia, the Russian Centre for Science and Culture in Addis Ababa, and the autonomous non-profit organisation "Russian Seasons", as part of the Days of Russian Spiritual Culture in Ethiopia.

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