

SEVENTH DAY OF CELEBRATIONS IN RUSSIA – JOINT SERVICE IN KIEV

On Sunday the 15th/28th of July 2013, a Joint Patriarchal, Primatial and Hieratic Service was held in the Square of the Kiev Caves Cathedrals of Lavra.

The exquisite Church of Lavra is dedicated to the Dormition of Theotokos. Its first founder was St Antony of Kiev, approximately in 1095. He was ordained monk in Mount Athos.

In these very deep and very large labyrinthine caverns, either carved or constructed, thousands of monks have lived in austere asceticism from the 11th century onwards. Holy relics are kept in the caves, some exuding myrrh and some imperishable, declaring the power of the grace of our Lord, the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ, as well as the sanctification of the body and its participation in theosis by grace.

The relics of several Russian saints are kept here, in the Cavern of Upper Lavra. The Cavern also includes many small chapels, such as those of St Theodosios, second founder of Lavra, and a chapel with 13th century mosaic icons on the iconostasis.

In the second Cave, known as the Near Caves, the holy relics of seventy three saints are kept. The Cave contains the chapels of St Theodosios, 12th century St Varlaam, hegoumen of Pecherskiy, the 13th century chapel of St Antony's Tonsured Monks, and the altar wherein the holy relics are kept.

On the walls of the caverns, small curved conches, closed,

attest to being openings of tombs of many unknown saints. The guide also pointed to a grave wherein are kept the bones of twelve architects who died in Lavra and were buried in its cemetery.

This work of architects is appreciated even more if one considers that the whole area of the Caves includes twenty-four ground Churches and six underground.

At the end of this holy and magnificent Pan-Orthodox Joint Service, His Beatitude Theophilos, Our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem, delivered an address on behalf of all Orthodox Churches. The English version of the address may be found here: <https://en.jerusalem-patriarchate.info/2013/07/28/2713>

After the divine Liturgy, an official lunch was held by Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All-Ukraine for all Prelates and Delegates of Local Orthodox Churches.

Subsequently, the Prelates and Delegates left from Kiev central train station at about 15:50, to arrive in Minsk, Belarus at 23:35 pm.

From the Secretariat-General

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