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ROCOR BISHOP CELEBRATES FEAST OF ST. IRENAEUS IN CRYPT AMONG RELICS OF MARTYRS OF LYONS



On Sunday, September 5, the leavetaking of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos and the feast of the great pre-schism Western father St. Irenaeus of Lyons, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the crypt where St. Irenaeus and innumerable martyrs of Lyons are buried.

The feast was celebrated by His Grace Bishop Irenei of London and Western Europe (Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia), whose enjoys the Heavenly protection of the 2nd-3rd-century martyr, as part of his archpastoral visit to the parish of St. John the Russian in Lyons, reports the Western European Diocese.

Vigil for the feast was celebrated at St. John’s Church, while the Divine Liturgy was

celebrated in the crypt that is home to the relics of St. Irenaeus and other Lyons saints. The services were prayed in Church Slavonic and French.



In his homily, Vladyka Irenei encouraged the faithful to follow the example of St. Irenaeus:

We honor today a saint for our times, for the world today is inundated with similar problems as St. Irenaeus faced. And it was another saint of the early Church who said of St. Irenaeus that “he was a man who lived up to his name”—for “Irenaeus” means “peace-maker,” and we discover in his holy example what it means to foster and create true peace: not to accommodate error, not to run in fear from the darkness of the world, not to retreat to the limits of our personal understandings or designs, but to stand firmly on the unchanging Truth of Jesus Christ; to abide by His teachings, whatever we may hear from the world around us; to follow the sacred teachings and canons of His Church, whatever forces may try to provoke us away from them; to be united in the singular reality of His life. This is the only way; there is no other! And if we cling to it with all our hearts, then our hearts will find peace, true peace—for the King of Peace shall reign in them, unhindered, conquering our sin and leading us to a pious life.

Following the Liturgy, parish rector Archpriest Quentin de Castelbajac congratulated Bp. Irenei on his name’s day, and a festive banquet was offered by the parish.

During his visit, Bp. Irenei and parishioners were also able to visit and venerate the relics and burial sites of other local saints.

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