

Thousands Set to Queue To View Orthodox Relic

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November 17, 2011

The  Moscow Times

Part of central Moscow is expected to see lines of thousands of people from Saturday as one of the most holy Orthodox relics goes on display at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.

The Mother of God's Belt arrives in Moscow on Saturday, marking the final stage of the relic's Russian tour, which has seen hundreds of thousands line up sometimes overnight to see the relic.

According to the Orthodox church, one of Jesus's disciples, Thomas the Apostle took the camel-hair belt from Mary's body before her resurrection into heaven. Today, the belt is believed to help penitents with matters of fertility and general healing.

Local media in St. Petersburg estimated that more than 200,000 people lined up to see the relic during its three-day stopover there. The relic also went to Yekaterinburg, Norilsk, Vladivostok, Tyumen, Nizhny Novgorod and Volgograd, among other cities.

Originally, the relic was set to leave Russia on Nov. 23, but due to the high number of petitioners in previous locations, the relic's Moscow stay was extended for four days.

The relic's journey from its usual resting place in the Vatopedi Orthodox Monastery, located on Mount Athos in Greece, was funded by the Foundation of St. Andrew, a nongovernmental organization aiming to "restore the [Russian] people and the country's belief in itself."

The public will be able to see the relic starting from midnight on Saturday, and it will remain on show 24 hours a day through Nov. 27.

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