



## **Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk visits holy places of the Orthodox Church of Antioch**

On October 21, 2020, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, during his working visit to Syria with a blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, visited old Christian holy places in the country. At the town of Maaloula he visited the church of the Holy Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus to see one of the oldest Christian altars arranged from an antique pagan altar.

After that Metropolitan Hilarion visited the Orthodox Convent of the St. Thecla, an early Christian martyr, in which he venerated her relics and had a talk with the spiritual father and sisters of the convent.

In 2013 the town was captured by Islamist militants; the convent was looted and the sisters were kidnapped. After the liberation the convent was restored with the help of Russian benefactors.

In the Our Lady of Saydnayya Convent, Metropolitan Hilarion venerated the miracle-working Icon of Our Lady of Seydnayya. The mother superior of the convent, Abbess Febronia related to His Eminence the history and the present life of the convent.

On the same day, Metropolitan Hilarion visited places associated with the life of St. Paul.

During his trip, the DECR chairman was accompanied by Hegumen Arseny (Sokolov), representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to the See of Antioch, Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations, and Sub-deacon Vyacheslav Li.

*DECR Communication Service*