On Easter night Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk celebrates festal divine service



On the night of 19th April 2020, the feast of the Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, at the Church of the 'Joy of All Who Sorrow' Icon of the Mother of God in Bolshaya Ordynka Street in Moscow, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk celebrated the Easter divine services – Midnight Office, procession with the cross inside the church, Paschal Matins and Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. Concelebrating with the archpastor were clerics of the church.

Prior to the procession with the cross Metropolitan Hilarion delivered a homily, saying in particular:

"The divine service that we will begin in several minutes will correspond to that remarkable moment when the women came to the tomb of the Saviour, but did not find Jesus's body, having seeing an angel in the empty tomb instead. According to the church tradition, we should have gone outside now with the

procession of the cross in order to bear witness to the Resurrection of Christ, but tonight the procession will take place inside the church. Then we will proclaim the glad tidings: “Christ is Risen!” and will celebrate the Resurrection of Christ.

“Yet, someone may ask: what does the Resurrection of Christ have to do with us? Yes, indeed, Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and the disciples and the women who had followed Him rejoiced. How does all this correspond with our life?

“In the most straightforward and direct way, for we also at some point in our life journey met the Risen Christ. And we meet Him again every time we celebrate Pascha or come to church to partake of the Holy Mysteries of Christ. We also meet Him when He wishes to meet with us and when we wish to see Him.

“The flame of rapture burning in our hearts when we hear of the Resurrection of Christ is the unmistakable sign that Christ is Risen. And when Easter comes, thousands of people go to churches and their hearts are kindled with joy of the Resurrection of Christ. An even now, when many are deprived of the opportunity to attend churches, the joy of the Risen Lord will nonetheless certainly blaze up in our hearts and will be burning throughout the next church year, up until the next Pascha.

“We have no doubt that at this time of hardships the Risen Christ will not leave us without His help. We will endure the misfortune that has befallen us and as soon as it becomes possible will return to normal life with renewed energy. The Lord Himself will grant us strength. And now, regardless of where we are, in a church or not, praising in hymns the Resurrection of Christ and rejoicing in the Risen Lord we all together will be with Christ, like the two of His disciples who met the Risen Saviour on their way to Emmaus.

“I would like to wish all of you, my dear, that you may meet the Risen Christ in your life journey as often as possible, that the joy of the Resurrection of Christ may always live in your hearts and that the Lord may fill your life with joy, light, peace, and firm belief in His presence. Nobody and no ordeals or afflictions will take away from us this joy, which Christ gives us, for the Saviour Himself will lead us through the trials.

“I wish you Paschal joy. May the Lord save you all!”

The Paschal Gospel (Jn 1:1-17) was read out by Metropolitan Hilarion and the clerics of the church in the Greek, Latin, English, French, Church Slavonic, Russian, Ukrainian and Japanese languages.

During the Litany of Fervent Supplication special prayers were offered due to the threat of the spreading

coronavirus infection.

After the Litany of Fervent Supplication, the archpastor lifted up a prayer to be read out at a time of spread of a harmful pestilence.

Hegumen Filaret (Tambovsky) read out **the Paschal Message of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to the Archpastors, Pastors, Monastics and All the Faithful Children of the Russian Orthodox Church**.

DECR Communication Service

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