



## Metropolitan Hilarion celebrated Divine Liturgy at the church of the Elevation of the Cross in Geneva



On June 2, 2019, the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pascha, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of the Elevation of the Cross in Geneva, Switzerland, the cathedral church of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia diocese of Western Europe.

His Eminence was assisted by Bishop Alexander of Vevey, vicar of the diocese Western Europe; Archpriest Pavel Tsvetkov, the church's ecclesiarch; Archpriest Peter Perekrestov, ecclesiarch of the Cathedral of our Lady the Joy for All the Afflicted in San Francisco; and Hieromonk Ioann (Kopeikin), pro-rector for development, Ss Cyril and Methodius Institute of Post-Graduate Studies (CMI).

In the church, there was a shrine with a part of the relics and belt of St. John, Archbishop of Shanghai the Wonderworker of San-Francisco. The shrine had been brought to Swiss parishes with a blessing of Archbishop Kirill of San Francisco and Western America and Bishop Irenaeus of Richmond and

Western Europe, on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the glorification of the saint.

After the Prayer of Fervent Supplication, Metropolitan Hilarion lifted up a prayer for peace in Ukraine.

In his sermon after the service, His Eminence Hilarion conveyed to the congregation a blessing from His Holiness Kirill, Patriarchate of Moscow and All Russia. Then he spoke about the Gospel's story about the healing of a man born blind, stressing that the Lord healed the blind man not only physically but also spiritually, bringing him to faith in Christ not just as man but as God Incarnate.

“Every Gospel's story speaks of Jesus Christ as God”, His Eminence said, “And He continues to live in our midst, with us and in us, for when we partake of the Holy Communion, the Lord Jesus Christ comes to dwell in us entering into our human essence”. Speaking about the difference between Christianity and other religions, he said that the difference between the life of a Christian and that of a non-believer is the same as the life of a blind one and a sighted one. “Externally, everything in our life as Christians seems to be similar to the life of other people, but inwardly our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ makes us aware of the meaning of our life and all that happens in it”. His Eminence concluded his sermon with the traditional exclamation “Christ is Risen!”

Then Bishop Alexander of Vevey greeted Metropolitan Hilarion and presented him with an Icon of All Saints in memory of the common prayer and a leaflet about the restoration of the church of the Elevation of the Cross.

*DECR Communication Service*

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