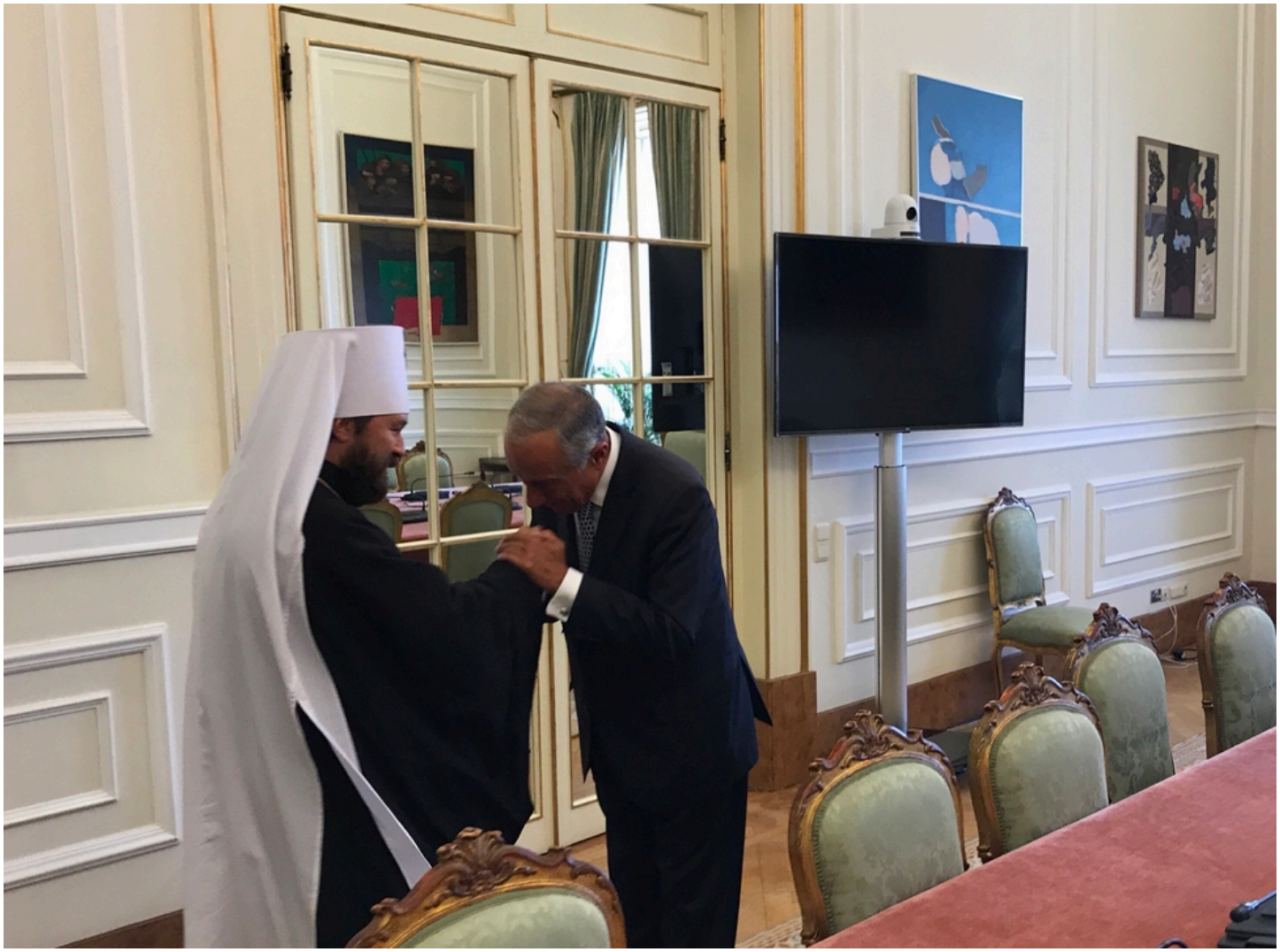
DECR chairman meets with President of Portugal



On September 19, 2018, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), met with the President of the Portuguese Republic Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, at the presidential residence in Lisbon.

The president warmly welcomed the metropolitan and his retinue, noting that for him it was a great honour and joy to receive a high-ranking representative of the Russian Orthodox Church which plays so important a role in today's Russian society and in the international sphere. Mr. Rebelo de Sousa pointed out with satisfaction the fruitful development of relations between Portugal and Russia in recent years.

The head of the state underscored that the Russian Orthodox Church occupies a proper place in the general picture of religious life in Portugal as the number of emigrants from countries of the former Soviet Union is growing.

His Eminence informed the president that in Portugal at present there are 20 parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate, which are accommodated in former Catholic churches and which have been provided gratis for Orthodox communities by local Catholic bishops.

The DECR chairman also informed the head of the Portuguese state about the revival and development of the Russian Orthodox Church with her great spiritual and moral authority in Russian society. ‘The fact that millions of Russians have embraced the Orthodox faith is a miracle that we owe to God, the Mother of God and the martyrs who were victimized in the years of persecution’, the metropolitan stressed.

The president expressed the conviction that religion, in addition to its importance in the sphere of private life, has a great social responsibility to be borne despite the process of secularization in the western society.

In conclusion of the meeting, the DECR chairman presented the Portuguese president with his book ‘The Mystery of Faith’ published in the Portuguese language.

During the meeting, Metropolitan Hilarion was accompanied by Hegumen Arseny (Sokolov), representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, Rev. Alexy Dikarev, DECR staff member, and Sub-deacon Ivan Nikolaev.

DECR Communication Service

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