



August 27, 2018 – Metropolitan Hilarion, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), met with newly appointed Italian Ambassador to Russia Pasquale Terracciano.

Participating in the meeting were also, from the Russian Orthodox Church, Archbishop Antoni of Vienna and Budapest, head of the Moscow Patriarchate office for the institutions abroad; and Archpriest Sergiy Zvonarev, DECR secretary for the far abroad. From the Italian embassy, there was Mr. Benedetto Giuntini, councillor for political affairs.

Metropolitan Hilarion warmly welcomed the new head of the Italian diplomatic mission to the oldest synodal department of the Russian Orthodox Church responsible for her internal contacts.

Mr. Terracciano, in his turn, pointed to the significance of the meeting and the important role played by

religious dialogue in the world today, which makes it possible to tackle various problems.

The DECR chairman told his interlocutor about the life of the Russian Orthodox Church, her ministry in countries of her canonical territory and pastoral care for the diaspora in far-abroad states.

Among the issues discussed was the interreligious dialogue in Russia, contacts between the Russian Church and the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant communities, as well as church-state relations.

At the request of the head of the Italian diplomatic mission, Metropolitan Hilarion shared information about the Orthodox Church and her past and present, canonical boundaries and the diptych of the Local Orthodox Church and existing schisms.

Archbishop Antony told the high-ranking diplomat about the Moscow Patriarchate parishes in Italy, the history of their development and today's ministry, the cooperation between the administration of the Italian parishes with the Roman Catholic Church in Italy and with Italian authorities.

In conclusion, the sides agreed to maintain a high level of interaction, which has been reached in recent years, and exchanged tokens of the meeting.

*DECR Communication Service*

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