Metropolitan Hilarion celebrates Divine Liturgy on the relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker in Bari

On 8 July 2018, the 6th Sunday after Pentecost, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the

Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), currently on a visit to Bari on the occasion of the meeting of the heads and representatives of Christian Churches and communities celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the crypt of the Basilica of St. Nicholas of Myra in Lycia on the relics of the saint. Concelebrating were Archpriest Vyacheslav Bachin, rector of the metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church in Bari, Rev. Aleksandr Avsievich, a cleric of the metochion, and Rev. Alexy Dikarev, a DECR staff member.

After the Litany of Fervent Supplication Metropolitan Hilarion offered up a prayer for peace in Ukraine.

Praying at the liturgy were many parishioners of the Russian church in Bari and pilgrims who have arrived to venerate the precious relics of St. Nicholas. After the liturgy Metropolitan Hilarion delivered a sermon, saying that St. Nicholas, who is venerated in the East and in the West also because of his amazing quick response to our prayers, always helps people. Metropolitan Hilarion continued with comments on the Reading from the Gospel, adding:

"In the stories about miracles we always read that acting in them are God's power and human faith, and miracles are performed thanks to them both. Many people do not notice miracles, but the Lord responds to the faith of those who can see miracles.

"Let us pray to the Lord beseeching him to keep us standing firm in our faith as it is our aid at any minute and especially in hard circumstances. Let us ask St. Nicholas the Wonderworker to help us on our way of faith, never have doubts and hesitations and always pray to God for salvation. Let us entreat aid of the saint to us and our near and dear."

After the liturgy a lunch was given at the community of Dominican Friars. Present were Metropolitan Hilarion; Mons. Francesco Cacucci, Archbishop of Bari-Bitonto; Fr. Gioivanni Distante, prior of the St. Nicholas Dominican community and its members; Archpriest Vyacheslav Bachin; and hierodeacon Grigory (Matrusov), a cleric of the metochion of the Russian Church in Bari.

Discussed was cooperation between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Archdiocese of Bari-Bitonto.

DECR Communication Service

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