



## Opening of the Academic Year at Ss Cyril and Methodius Institute for Post-Graduate Studies



October 3, 2017 – The Opening of the Academic Year at the Ss Cyril and Methodius Institute of Post-Graduate (CMI) Studies took place after the Divine Liturgy celebrated at the church of Martyrs Michael and Theodore at the Chernigov Brothers Metochion in Moscow.

Opening the solemn meeting, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations and CMI Rector Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk greeted the assembly noting, 'It is gratifying to see in this hall those who study and those who make research through which the CMI develops as a center of academic theological studies and a center of training highly qualified academic and administrative diplomatic personnel for the Russian Orthodox Church. It is also gratifying to see here representatives of the country's leading universities, partners, governmental officials and educators as we work in close contact with them seeking to fulfill the strategic tasks of developing theological education in our country and enhancing its role and the role of religion in personal education and formation'.

The archpastor gave special attention to the latest achievements in the assertion of theology as a full-fledged academic discipline. 'Theology as a specialty has been included in the list of the Supreme Attestation Commission; there is now the SAC Experts Board and the first Dissertation Council on Theology; the first dissertation has been defended. The Ministry of Education and Science has decided to grant an academic degree precisely on Theology, not on related branches, His Eminence said stating that the work to develop theology as an academic branch should continue so that this science can become authoritative in the eyes of the academic community. According to the CMI rector, it is necessary to ensure the formation of a system of theological education in Russia on the basis of the best educational technologies, to create new textbooks and methodological aids for universities and to take all possible measures for training school teachers on the basis of theological education.

In conclusion of his speech, Metropolitan Hilarion stressed that at the present moment there is a clear need for creating a unified information, methodology and expertise space in this academic branch.

In their addresses, high-ranking guests of the Opening stressed the importance of actions taken by the Russian Orthodox Church in the process of developing and shaping the new discipline in the Russian educational space.

Thus, director of the Education and Science Ministry managements department Ms. Veronica Kravchuk expressed wishes of success to the CMI 'in the field of the development of the branch' and congratulated it on the first divine service celebrated in the restored church. She said that Minister of Education and Science Olga Vasilyeva kept track of the Opening Assembly.

Dr. Mikhail Strikhanov, rector of the National Nuclear Research Institute 'MIPhi', informed the assembly that MIPhi, which has a Chair of Theology, pays a considerable attention to cooperation with the Church because it is 'a major educational mechanism'. 'Our cooperation can go up along various vertical lines and can become a basis for setting up a working group in which theology should be incorporated in the educational course', said the head of the largest technical university in Russia.

Prof. Dr. Yevgeny Bazhanov, rector of the Diplomatic Academy under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, speaking about the cooperation between his academy and the Russian Orthodox Church, noted that in May 2017 the Diplomatic Academy held a meeting at the CMI and signed a cooperation agreement between the CMI and the Academy.

Prof. Dr. Vladimir Mau, rector of the Russian Presidential Academy of Economy and Public Administration, reminded the assembly that his Academy was the first to support Metropolitan Hilarion's initiative for developing theology in Russia. 'In the CMI today there are adults and conscious civilians who come here for additional education', he stressed.

Prof. Dr. Aleksy Lubkov, rector of Moscow State Pedagogical University, thanked His Eminence Hilarion for the assistance given in establishing a chair of theology in his university and presented him with a canvas with a historical depiction of Pyatnitskaya Street and the Chernigov Metochion, painted by a graduate of the leading pedagogical university in the country.

Prof. Dr. Yefim Pivovarov, rector of the University of the Humanities and chairman of the SAC experts commission on theology, noted that his university, in which the history of the Church has been traditionally studied, is ready to continue cooperation with the CMI, especially in the area of theoretical theology. He expressed hope that the common efforts of secular and ecclesial specialists 'will bring forth fruits worthy of Russia'.

In conclusion of the Opening, Metropolitan Hilarion summed up the results of the meeting.

*CMI Press Service*

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