Metropolitan Hilarion celebrates the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of the Elevation of the Cross in Geneva

On February 12, 2017, the Sunday of the Prodigal Son and the Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs, Ss Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of the Elevation of the Cross in Geneva, Switzerland. He was assisted by Archbishop Michael of Geneva and Western Europe (Russian Church Outside of Russia); Archpriest Mikhail Gundyaev, Moscow Patriarchate representative to the World Council of Churches; Hieromonk Ioann (Kopeikin), pro-rector of the SS Cyril and Methodius Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and the clergy of the cathedral.

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

After the liturgy Archbishop Michael greeted His Eminence Hilarion and presented him with an icon of the Saviour-Not-Made-with-Hands for memory in prayer.

In his response Metropolitan Hilarion said:

> ‘Dear Vladyka
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> Dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters!
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> ‘I would like to convey to you all a blessing from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. With his blessing I am here in Switzerland now, delighted at the opportunity to visit again this beautiful historic church, one of the shrines of the Russian Diaspora, and to lift up prayers together with you, dear Vladyka, and to rejoice in the fact that the cathedral is being restored, with dark layers removed to reveal the original bright frescoes to the eyes of our Orthodox faithful.
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> ‘It is now nearly ten years since the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia has been in full communion with the Moscow Patriarchate. In these years, we have had many opportunities to pray together, to serve together, to communicate together and to rejoice in our communion. Today we have again lifted up prayers for the unity of our Church, for all our faithful, both those

who live in their motherland and those who are in diaspora and those who are suffering today in the Ukrainian land.

‘Every time when we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, we lift up a prayer for Ukraine, remembering millions of our faithful who are subjected today to all kinds of trials, including direct persecution. We ask the Lord to pacify the intestine struggle, so that there may be peace in the land of Ukraine again and that we may *with one's heart in one's mouth* praise the Lord glorified in the Trinity’

Then His Eminence addressed the congregation with a homily on the themes of the day.

DECR Communications Service

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