Metropolitan Hilarion speaks at enlarged meeting of Academic Council of Moscow State Linguistic University



On January 17, 2017, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR) and rector of the Ss Cyril and Methodius Institute of Post-Graduate Studies (CMI), visited the Moscow State Linguistic University (MSLU). He was welcomed by I. Manokhin, acting president of the university.

His Eminence celebrated a thanksgiving at the university's Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene on the occasion of its 200th anniversary and the 10th anniversary of the resumption of worship in it. Among his concelebrants were Archpriest Maxim Shevtsov, rector of the St Elijah church in Obydensky Pereulok, to which the university chapel is attached; Rev. Dimitry Saphonov, DECR secretary for interreligious relations and secretary of the CMI academic council; and Rev. Andrey Dorokhin of the St. Elijah church.

The congregation included I. Manokhin, professors and students.

Addressing the gathering, Metropolitan Hilarion said in particular:

> ‘The chapel in a university is a place to which professors and students can come to lift up prayers to God, the Mother of God and saints. Remarkably, this church is dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene, who is mentioned in the Gospel more often than other women are. She is the only woman mentioned in all the four Gospels. In praying to her – a witness of the Resurrection of Christ whom the Church has called equal to the apostles, for she undertook the same exploit as the apostles did – we come to think about the mission placed on each one of us.
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> ‘It is not accidental that the Lord has given us life – it is given for us to fulfil a certain service on this earth. This service is peculiar to each person and everyone can be an apostle of Christ, not only a man but also a woman, because the Lord wishes that we should preach goodness and bring light to people so that each may become a source of goodness and light, as the Lord Himself commanded: “In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Mt. 5:16).
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> I wish God’s help to the leadership of the university and the Lord’s mercy to all who come to this holy church to pray in it. I would like to wish you that, along with one-time visits to the church when a student comes before an exam or a defense of a thesis to put a candle, there may also be in the church regular divine services. Indeed, it is for this purpose that churches are built. I wish that all the Orthodox students, who are many in this university, could come here on Sundays and feast days to pray to God and participate in the Divine Liturgy”.

At the university foyer, a display of Metropolitan Hilarion’s books was organized. The exposition included the book *Patriarch Kirill. In His Own Words* published as part of a joint project of the CMI and St Vladimir’s Seminary in New York.

During his visit to the university, Metropolitan Hilarion had a talk with its acting president I. Manokhin. Taking part in the meeting were Rev. Dimitry Saphonov, DECR secretary for interreligious relations and secretary of the CMI academic council, and representatives of the university administration.

After that an enlarged meeting of the MSLU Academic Council began at the assembly hall in the presence of numerous professors and students.

The meeting was opened with the singing of the university’s anthem performed by its capella.

I. Manokhin made a report about Metropolitan Hilarion's academic and educational work and voiced the MSLU Academic Council's decision to grant His Eminence the degree of doctor emeritus.

His Eminence was presented with the doctor's diploma and gown. The capella sang 'Many Years…' followed by two Metropolitan compositions: "O Holy God" and "It Is Meet and Right".

At His Eminence's request the assembly held a minute of silence in memory of Leut.-Gen. Valery Khalilov, artistic director of the Alexandrov Ensemble, who composed the MSLU anthem, and all those who died together with him in the plane crash over the Black Sea.

This was followed by an address by Metropolitan Hilarion, in which he spoke about the linguistic training of future pastors, the importance of theology to be present in the secular educational space, the difference between theology and religious studies and the importance of learning religious traditions for opposing extremism and terrorism perpetrated under religious slogans. Then His Eminence answered numerous questions from the audience.

In conclusion of the meeting, I. Manokhin presented the high guest with the book 'The Church of St. Mary Magdalene of the Moscow State Linguistic University. Present and Past'. The foreword to this edition, which came out in December 2016, was written by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk.

DECR Communication Service

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