Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk meets with Pope Francis



On 10 December 2016, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), met with Pope Francis at the Apostolic Palace in Vatican City.

On behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill the DECR chairman conveyed greetings and best wishes to Pope Francis on the occasion of his 80th birthday due to be celebrated on December 17 and gave him a present from His Holiness – an icon of St. Seraphim of Sarov. Pope Francis asked to convey his cordial gratitude and brotherly greetings to Patriarch Kirill.

Discussed at the meeting were various issues pertaining to bilateral relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. Metropolitan Hilarion emphasized that topics raised at the historic meeting of Primates of the two Churches held in Havana last February remain relevant and urgent, for instance, the situation in the Middle East where terrorists are killing innocent people.

Attention was paid to the development of cultural cooperation marled by high-profile events, such as the unique exhibition of masterpieces of Italian religious paintings from the Vatican Museums, which was opened in Moscow on November 25, and a concert of religious music which the Moscow Synodal Choir and the Sistine Chapel Choir will perform in Rome on December 11.

Taking part in the meeting were Mons. Visvaldas Kulbokas of the State Secretariat and the Rev. Alexy Dikarev, a staff member of the DECR.

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