



## **Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk celebrates Divine Liturgy at the Moscow Patriarchate's church in Pescara, Italy**



On 18 September 2016, the 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, who had arrived in Italy to take part in the 14<sup>th</sup> session of the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue upon the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and in compliance with the decision of the Holy Synod, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Moscow Patriarchate's Church of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos in Pescara. Concelebrating with Metropolitan Hilarion were archpriest Vyacheslav Safonov, rector of the church, and priest Alexy Dikarev, DECR staff member. Among those praying at the service were numerous faithful of the Russian Orthodox Church from Ukraine, Russia, Moldova and other countries, who are living in and near Pescara.

After the Litany of Fervent Supplication, Metropolitan Hilarion said a prayer for peace in Ukraine.

The Liturgy was followed by a homily, in which the archpastor drew the attention of the worshippers to the following words from St Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor 16:13), that were read out during the service that day. Metropolitan Hilarion called upon the faithful living far from their homeland to preserve the Orthodox faith and to find in this faith a source of spiritual and physical strength for overcoming the difficulties that the life in a foreign country creates, for raising their children and grandchildren and for maintaining true spiritual ties with their homeland and the Church.

Read out during the Liturgy that day was the Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers from the Gospel according to Mathew, which, as the archpastor noted in his homily, tells about the people who received a vineyard to work in and yield good fruit to the Lord. However, they considered themselves to be owners of this vineyard and repudiated God. As Metropolitan Hilarion said, it is not sufficient just to believe in God's existence; in order to be true believers, it is necessary to read the Gospel every day and ask ourselves if our life corresponds to the ideal that the Saviour Himself wrote in it. It is necessary to be faithful to God not only in words, but in deeds as well, fulfill His commandments and bring to Him timely the fruits of our labours and obedience.

*DECR Communication Service*

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