



**THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Department for External Church Relations

## **DECR chairman's greets the conference on 'St. Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles – Millennium of His Repose'**

*On October 10, 2015, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Holiness Patriarch Irenaeus of Bulgaria, a conference on the millennium of the repose of the Holy Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles took place in the Center of Information and Culture in Sofia. Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR), sent the following message of greetings to the participants in the conference:*

Your Holiness,

Your Eminences and Graces,

Esteemed Mr. Ambassador, Reverend Father Philip,

Dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters:

This year the Russian Orthodox Church marks the millennium of the repose of the Holy Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles. On behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, I wholeheartedly greet you all as you have gathered for a conference devoted to this outstanding historic date.

By worldly measures the Holy Prince Vladimir is separated from us by an immense historical time – a thousand years, but the image of the Baptizer of Rus, who shook off the blindness of paganism into the waters of Baptism and was reborn by the Spirit of God in order to bring his subjects of the knowledge of the Gospel's truth, continues to live in the prayerful memory of the peoples nourished not only by the Russian Orthodox Church but also other Local Orthodox Churches.

All these peoples, who live in remote places and differ from one another in language and mentality and who have followed different historical paths, have come to one common Orthodox faith, to the unity in Christ, thus confirming the words of the Apostle of the Gentiles: *For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body* (1 Cor. 12:13). It was in different times that the Holy Prince Rostislav of Moravia and the Holy King Olaf of Norway baptized their nations. It was in different situations that the Holy King Boris the Baptizer of Bulgaria and the Holy Prince Vladimir had to act, but from the spiritual point of view

their lives comprise one and the same feat of the service of Christ the Saviour equal to that of the apostles *so that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured* (2 Thes. 3:1).

Therefore the memory of the millennium of the repose of the Baptizer of Rus unites in a very special way the faithful of the Russian and Bulgarian Orthodox Churches, just as they are united by their common spiritual tradition which was initiated by the work of enlightenment carried out by Ss Cyril and Methodius Equal-to-the-Apostles and their disciples and which came to Rus through the Bulgarian missionaries who responded to the call of St. Vladimir.

From my heart I wish to the organizers, participants and guests of the Conference inspiration, creative successes and interesting work.

**Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk**

**Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations**

**Moscow Patriarchate**

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