Metropolitan Hilarion celebrates Divine Liturgy at the Church of St. Innocent of Irkutsk in Labdarin



On 16 May 2015, Metropolitan Hilarion celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Church of St. Innocent of Irkutsk in Labdarin, an administrative centre of E'erguna in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region of the People's Republic of China.

Archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR vice-chairman; Rev. Sergy Voronin, rector of the Church of the Dormition located in the territory of the Russian Embassy in Beijing, and deacon Alexander Karzan, DECR chairman's secretary, concelebrated.

After the Liturgy Metropolitan Hilarion delivered a homily on the meaning of the Sacrament of the Eucharist and wished all those who have come to attend the service 'to love God and the church of God thus being able to pass the Orthodox faith received from fathers and grandfathers to children and grandchildren.'

There were eighteen churches and one monastery in the Three-River Region before the Cultural Revolution. They were destroyed in 1967.

In 1990, the people's government of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region recognized Orthodoxy as a religion traditionally present in the region, and a stone church was built in Labdarin at the expense of the Hulun-Buer government as a compensation for the destroyed churches. On 30 August 2009 the church was consecrated by the Revd. Michael Wang, the eldest priest of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church.

In the evening Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk and his suite met with Mayor A Jin Le of E'erguna; Yue Xiaobo, head of the United Front department of the E'erguna Committee of the Communist Party of China; Yang Zhougwei, deputy mayor of E'erguna; and leaders of the Administrations for religious affairs of Inner Mongolia autonomous region, of Hulun-Buer and E'erguna. The sides discussed the development of contacts between the Orthodox Christians in Russia and China. Taking part in the talk were also Ernst Yurkin, first secretary of the Russian Embassy in China and staff members of the PRC State Administration for Religious Affairs: Dai Chenjing, director of the 4th Department of SARA; her deputy Zhao Yanhua; Ms. Hue Chunmei of the Department for International Relations; and Hao Rougnan of the 4th Department of SARA.

That same day Metropolitan Hilarion and his suite visited the largest in Asia national park of the Erguna river basin near Labdarin and also the Xishan national park in Hulum-Buer and met with Men Sunling, head of the United Front department of Hulum-Buer committee of the CPC.

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