



## Metropolitan Hilarion completes his visit to Metropolia of Tatarstan



On March 29, 2015, the 5d Sunday of Lent, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, celebrated the Divine Liturgy together of Metropolitan Anastasy of Kazan and Tatarstan and Bishop Mefody of Almetyevsk and Bugulma at the Cathedral of the Annunciation in the Kazan Kremlin. He was assisted by diocesan clergy.

Among the worshippers were sisters of mercy, participants in the Metropolia's youth held in Kazan, Cossacks, and students of the Suvorov and Tank Military Schools. There were also governmental officials.

After the Dismissal, Metropolitan Anastasy greeted Metropolitan Hilarion on behalf of the faithful of the Metropolia of Tatarstan, saying in particular, 'With the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, we officially begin today the celebrations marking the millennium of the blessed demise of Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles'. The celebrations are to last throughout this year.

Addressing Metropolitan Anastasy, clergy and worshippers, His Eminence Hilarion congratulated them on the beginning of the celebrations, noting that the Metropolia of Tatarstan was the first among all the ROC metropolias to begin them.

'For us, the memory of the Holy Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles is of special significance. His memory is sacred for us because he was the baptizer of Rus' and thanks to him the Christian faith, the Orthodox faith, came to our land. We venerate him with love and reverence because in his efforts he was like the apostles who brought to the world the good news about the resurrection of Christ', he said.

Expressing the wish that the Orthodox faithful in the Republic of Tatarstan may show an example of truly Christian way of life, Metropolitan Hilarion said: 'We know that in our country, people of other faiths live side by side with Orthodox people, and God calls us all to be in peace with all them. We should be in peace with all so that we could walk together to the Kingdom of God' (cf. Heb. 12:14).

After the service, His Eminence Hilarion visited the Kazan Diocesan Administration, which was opened in 2013.

Then he went to the church of the Holy Martyr Kirill, Metropolitan of Kazan. It is the only church in Russia dedicated to this new martyr. It was built in one of the new districts in Kazan and consecrated in 2013. There are support groups functioning at the parish to help those suffering from alcoholic and drug dependence. The parish also maintains cooperation with the district social department in helping the needy and troubled families. The parish also runs an Apostol center uniting a Sunday school, a drama school, an amateur choir of academic singing, a children's music school, a sewing school, the Gospel courses, a lecture hall, an Orthodox press school, a photo-school and computer courses. Metropolitan Hilarion inspected classes and talked to children and teachers.

Parishioners presented to Metropolitan Hilarion a video-report about the activities of the Metropolia's social youth movement and showed him the performance of parish artistic teams.

Metropolitan Hilarion presented certificates of the Metropolia of Tatarstan's grants to winners of the youth social contest 'Love! Live! Act!' The grants had been established to involve Orthodox youth in promoting socially significant initiatives.

After that he answered questions from the mass media.

In the afternoon, Metropolitan Hilarion visited the photo-exhibition 'Towards the Millennium of the Demise of the Holy Prince Vladimir: Faith through the lens of contemporaries'. Along with works of

professional Orthodox photographers, the exhibition shows works of representatives of Islam and Judaism. Metropolitan Hilarion addressed the participants in the exhibition and guests. Among the speakers at the opening was also the first deputy head of the Tatarstan Muslim Board, Rustem Batrov.

In the evening, the DECR chairman departed for Moscow. He was seen off by the Metropolia's clergy and representatives of the Tatarstan Presidential Administration.

*DECR Communication Service*

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