Metropolitan Hilarion visits Vatopedi Monastery and Russian Xilourgou Skete



In the evening of March 11, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, who was visiting Mount Athos with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, arrived in the Vatopedi Monastery. During Grand Compline, Metropolitan Hilarion was praying together with the brethren of the monastery and pilgrims. After the evening service the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church met with Archimandrite Ephraim, father superior of the abode.

On March 12, the DECR chairman celebrated the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts at the Church of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos. Concelebrating with him were the brethren and ordained members of the delegation.

After the service Metropolitan Hilarion, together with the brethren and the pilgrims, proceeded to the refectory. During the repast, Archimandrite Ephraim greeted the delegation of the Russian Orthodox

Church.

Metropolitan Hilarion said in response:

“Very Reverend Father Ephraim, dear brethren of the monastery,

“I want to convey to you the greeting from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. He follows closely the life of this holy abode, being aware of the afflictions that you, father hegumen, are suffering. The Russian Orthodox Church in the person of her Patriarch is always with you. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill asked me to convey his love and blessing to all the brethren.

“It is always with great joy that I visit this holy abode. I know that according to special ordo of this monastery, the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts is celebrated every day here during Lent. I am accustomed to celebrate the Divine Liturgy every day during my visits to the Holy Mount Athos. That is why, when I visit Athos during Lent, in the days when in other monasteries the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts is not celebrated, I try to come here to partake of the Holy Gifts together with you. Since what is more important for a monk than to participate in the Eucharist?

“The Holy Communion grants the eternal life unto every Christian, uniting us with God. During Lent, when we follow the path of repentance, the Lord strengthens us in the Eucharist and bridges the gap between Him and us, created by our sins.

“I am pleased with the opportunity to visit your holy monastery again. I wish all of you God’s help in following your monastic path which leads to the Heavenly Kingdom.

“May the Lord bless our labours. And may the Most Holy Theotokos cover us with her precious veil.”

After venerating the shrines of the Vatopedi Monastery, Metropolitan Hilarion and his suite left for the Skete of the Dormition of the Mother of God (Xilourgou), where he was met by the prior of the skete, hieromonk Simeon. The DECR chairman examined the construction and restoration work carried out in the skete with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill.

Later the delegation visited the Skete of St Andrew and venerated the holy head of St Andrew the First-Called.

DECR Communication Service

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