



## **Metropolitan Hilarion begins pilgrimage to Mount Athos**

On 10 March 2015, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), arrived in the Holy Mount Athos with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

Metropolitan Hilarion is accompanied by archimandrite Antony (Servryuk), rector of the stavropegic church of St. Catherine the Great Martyr in Rome and secretary of the Administration of the Moscow Patriarchate parishes in Italy; DECR staff member Anatoly Churyakov; students of the Ss Cyril and Methodius Theological Institute of Post-Graduate Studies hierodeacons Grigory (Sokolov) and Nikolay (Ono), and laymen A. Rybakov and G. Gurovanidis.

On the first day of his pilgrimage Metropolitan Hilarion and his suite visited the Russian Monastery of St. Panteleimon and prayed with the brethren and pilgrims at Grand Compline.

On March 11, the DECR chairman celebrated the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts at the Church of the Assumption of the Mother of God. After the service, Metropolitan Hilarion met with Protoepistat, hieromonk Simeon, and members of the Holy Epistasia. The meeting was followed by a conference of the Holy Kinot's and the Moscow Patriarchate's commissions on preparation for the celebration of the 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Russian presence at Mount Athos.

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