



## **Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk continues his pilgrimage to Romania**

On 6 September 2014, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, while on pilgrimage to Romania, visited a number of abodes of the Metropolitan See of Moldova and Bucovina of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Accompanied by the Archbishop of Iași, Metropolitan Teofan of Moldova and Bucovina, Metropolitan Hilarion arrived in the Voroneț Convent which was founded in the 15th century by the Holy Right-Believing Voivode Stephen the Great. The Voroneț Convent, as well as the Humor, Sucevița, Arbore, and Moldovița Monasteries, is known worldwide by its frescoes which cover the walls of the church not only inside, but also outside. The murals of those Bucovina monasteries are considered masterpieces of church art thanks to the richness and theological depth of their images and to the exceptional refinement of execution.

At the convent gate, Metropolitan Hilarion and his suite were met by Archbishop Pimen of Suceava and Rădăuți, hegumeness Irina and sisters of the abode. The DECR chairman saw the Cathedral of the Holy Great Martyr George the Victory-Bearer. After that he was invited to an archandarikon where he was offered refreshments and made an entry in the book of honourable guests.

Later, Metropolitan Hilarion, accompanied by Metropolitan Teofan and Archbishop Pimen, visited the Humor Convent where he venerated the shrines and saw the frescoes of the Church of Christ's Resurrection.

The next place of his pilgrimage was the majestic Sucevița Convent dedicated to the Ascension of Our Lord. The history of the convent is associated with the Mogila dynasty of the Moldavian Voivodes. St. Peter (Mogila) the Metropolitan of Kiev, venerated at the abode, descended from that family. Hegumeness Michaela and sisters of the convent warmly greeted the guests.

Having visited the Sucevița Convent, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk and his travelling companions headed for the Putna Monastery. There, at the Cathedral of the Dormition, they saw the burial vault of the Holy Voivode Stephen the Great and tombs of his relatives. Metropolitan Hilarion proceeded to the sanctuary of the Cathedral, where, at the request of the hegumen of the monastery, he made a commemorative inscription on a flyleaf of the liturgical Gospel.

Having given his blessing to the brethren of the abode, Metropolitan Hilarion left for the Varatic Convent. On his way to the convent the DECR chairman visited the cave of St. Daniel the Hermit, spiritual counselor to the Holy Right-Believing Voivode Stephen the Great. There he bade farewell to Archbishop Pimen of Suceava and Rădăuți, having thanked him for the hospitality offered in his diocese to the pilgrims from the Russian Orthodox Church.

Bishop Cornilius of Huși, hegumennes Josephine and sisters of the abode met Metropolitan Hilarion and Metropolitan Teofan at the convent gate. Singing prayers and holding lit candles in their hands, they led the guests to the relics of St. Joseph of Varatic, disciple of St. Paisius Velichkovsky and the first confessor of the abode.

Living in the Varatic Convent now are four hundred and fifty sisters. It is the largest convent not only in Romania, but in the whole Orthodox world.

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Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/51128/>