



## **Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk takes part in first session of Organizing Committee of the 23rd International Educational Christmas Readings**



On 10 April 2014, the first session of the Organizing Committee of the 23<sup>rd</sup> International Educational Christmas Readings “Prince Vladimir. Russia’s Civilization Choice” took place at the St Sergius Hall of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. The meeting was chaired by Metropolitan Merkury of Rostov and Novocheboksarsk, head of the Department for Religious Education and Catechization of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Metropolitan Merkury opened the session and conveyed to the participants the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, chairman of the International Christmas Readings. In his address, Metropolitan Merkury focused on various issues of preparation for the educational forum, mentioning its two stages – the international one and the regional one, and noted the importance of cooperation between Synodal institutions and diocesan hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church in organizing the regional stage of the Christmas Readings.

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, greeted all those present. Metropolitan Hilarion acts as the chairman of the Russian Orthodox Church's Organizing Committee for the celebration of the 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the demise of the Holy Prince Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles. In his address, the DECR chairman presented a number of proposals on publishing, educational and media projects within the framework of the Readings for popularizing historical, spiritual and cultural heritage of St Vladimir who baptized Russia. The archpastor expressed his hope that the 2015 Christmas Readings would be an important event not only for Russia, but also for the countries of the historical Rus' and for the compatriots who live in far abroad countries and make up one civilization space in which the heritage of the Holy Prince Vladimir is being preserved.

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