DECR delegation visits Vatican and meets with Pope Francis

On March 30-April 4, 2014, hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations, and Rev. Alexey Dikarev, a DECR staff member, paid a working visit to the Vatican with the blessing of Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the DECR.

On April 2, the DECR delegates attended the general audience of Pope Francis at St. Peter's Square and later met with the Pope. They conveyed greetings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill to Pope Francis who asked them to convey his warm greetings and best wishes to the Patriarch and also to Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk. An importance of developing bilateral relations between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Holy See was noted during the talk.

The DECR representatives met with Cardinal Koch, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, president of the Pontifical Council for the Family, and Monsignor Carlos Azevedo, bishop delegate of the Pontifical Council for Culture. Practical cooperation

between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, including cultural and social exchange, was discussed.

The guests from Russia were introduced to social ministry of the Community of Sant'Egidio and met with its general secretary, Prof. Adriano Roccucci.

Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov) and Rev. Alexey Dikarev visited the Russian parish of St. Catherine in Rome and attended Matins at which the Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete was read. Archimandrite Antoniy (Sevryuk), rector of the church and secretary of the deanery of the Moscow Patriarchate parishes in Italy officiated at the service.

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