



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk celebrates Divine Liturgy at the Monastery of St Panteleimon on Mount Athos

On 15 February 2014, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, visited the Old Roussikon hermitage which is undergoing restoration.

That same day the pilgrims arrived in the Monastery of St Panteleimon and met with its hegumen, schema-archimandrite Jeremiah. After vigil, Metropolitan Hilarion venerated the shrines of the monastery and visited a new church dedicated to the holy Russian sovereigns.

On 16 February, the DECR chairman celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Intercession Church of the Monastery of St Panteleimon. At a festive repast after the service, Metropolitan Hilarion addressed the brethren with an archpastoral word, saying in particular:

"I would like to convey to you the blessing from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, who visited this holy abode last year.

"Every time I come to the monastery I feel joy seeing its buildings being restored. And yesterday I had an opportunity to see a new church, dedicated to the holy Russian sovereigns.

"I am particularly glad that with God's help, the monastic life at the abode prospers and the monastic community, which our predecessors built during many centuries, is maintained by our labours and prayers.

"During this visit, I was at the Xilourgou hermitage, the first Russian settlement on Mount Athos, and saw that the restoration works are under way there. I also visited the Old Roussikon, where a church and other buildings are being restored. I believe it means that the Russian monasticism on Athos has not only the past, but the future as well. And no doubt, the Russian Athonite monasticism has the present, which is you, my dear brothers. Living in the bosom of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, you, nevertheless, pray for your earthly homeland and for your relatives. Keep praying for them, keep praying for your country and keep loving it, because it is an earthly lot given by God to each of you.

"It is important that the brethren of this monastery keep praying for His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, for bishops, clergy, and pious laypeople of the Russian Church. The Church needs your prayers. The spiritual bonds between this holy abode and the Russian Orthodox Church are unbreakable, being strengthened by your prayers."

That same day, Metropolitan Hilarion and his suite arrived in Thessaloniki and later left for Moscow.

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