DECR chairman attends the opening of Moscow International Forum ‘Religion and Peace’



The first Moscow International Forum ‘Religion and Peace’ on ‘The States and Religions. Models of Co-existence and Cooperation Experience in Public Space’ opened on December 13, 2013. It takes place on the initiative of the Department of international cooperation, national politics and relations with religious organizations of Moscow with over four hundred participants, including representatives of major religions, experts in inter-confessional relations from Russia, Europe and the USA, state and public figures, representatives of the legislative and executive powers from forty regions of Russia, leading scholars and mass media representatives.

Invited to the forum on behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations; Bishop Panteleimon of Orekhovo-Zuevo, chairman of the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Ministry; archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for Church-Society Relations; and Mr. Vladimir Legoida, chairman of the Synodal Information Department.

Before the session, Metropolitan Hilarion met with Mr. Yuri Artyukh, head of the Department of international cooperation. They exchanged opinions on the state of interreligious relations in the capital of Russia.

Metropolitan Hilarion greeted the participants on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, noting that 'His Holiness is not only the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, but also Bishop of Moscow. He takes all events in our city very much to heart and pays particular attention to cooperation among representatives of different religious groups and traditions who live in our multi-million city.'

DECR chairman expressed his hope for the forum to be not the last in a series of experts conferences that would help solve the problems of inter-religious cooperation and co-existence, enhance the level of understanding of religious issues, and promote peace and accord in society.

Metropolitan Hilarion presented a report on 'Christianity in Contemporary Europe: a New Reality' at the session on "Religious Roots of Value Systems.'

Meeting the journalists, Metropolitan Hilarion commented on the forum, saying: 'Many such forums were held in different cities of Russia during the last twenty years, but it is the first one in Moscow sponsored by the authorities of Moscow, a multi-million city, living in which are the followers of different religious traditions. I consider an initiative to gather and discuss a value system on which our life should be based right and timely. Any such meeting facilitates consolidation of people and helps them feel as residents of one house bearing direct responsibility for its integrity and security. Therefore, such forums are useful and necessary as they help us keep our common house and promote peace and accord.'

Speaking about the problems in society, Metropolitan Hilarion underscored that traditional religions offered the way of life, while modern secular society offered the way of death, as modern secular ideology is dominated by moral relativism, a notion that there are no absolute moral values, that they are relative. 'Family is being deliberately dismantled. Any union of people of any sex and number formed for any purpose can be called 'family' in the European Union and equated to marriage with the right to adopt children. Most certainly, we cannot agree with this moral paradigm. I believe that religious confessions in our country should combine efforts in protecting our nation and our children so that we can have the future.'

Metropolitan Hilarion also told the journalists how these common efforts could help to keep peace in multi-ethnic regions.

Answering the question about socially important initiative that could unite representatives of traditional religions, Metropolitan Hilarion named work in the social sphere, as we saw it during natural disasters that befell our country in recent years. People worked together and helped the victims irrespective of their belonging to a religion or a Church. The Russian Orthodox Church rendered assistance not only to the Orthodox, but to all people who needed it. ‘We should remember that we are responsible for our common home and should work for our common good,’ he said in conclusion.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/51938/