



Metropolitan Hilarion: Through participation in church sacraments, we partake of the Divine light



On August 19, 2013, the Day of the Transfiguration of the Lord, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Department for External Church Relations, celebrated the Divine Liturgy and the rite of the blessing of fruit at the Moscow Church of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted-at-Bolshaya-Ordynka.

Among his concelebrants were Archimandrite Spiridon (Katramados), secretary of the Greek Orthodox Church's Synodal department for pilgrims; Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), DECR vice-chairman, and other ordained staff members of the Department for External Church Relations; as well as clergy of the Church of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted. Among worshippers in the sanctuary was Metropolitan Athanasios of Kyrenia, head of the Moscow representation of the Patriarchate of Alexandria.

Present at the service were Mgr Andrzej Józłowicz, Apostolic Nunciature counsellor, Rev. Igor Kovalevsky, secretary-general of the Conference of Catholic Bishops in Russia, and Rev. Francesco Tedeschi, Community of St. Egidio in Rome.

Deacon Alexey Dikarev, a staff member of the DECR Secretariat for Inter-Christian Relations, was ordained priest during the Liturgy.

After the service, Metropolitan Hilarion addressed the worshippers with a homily, saying in particular:

“I greet all of you, dear fathers, brothers and sisters, with the patronal feast of our church – the Day of the Transfiguration of our Lord. On this festive and sunny day, we should ask ourselves why the sun is shining so brightly in the sky and what it gives to us. Watching the nature life, we see that the whole cycle of nature depends on the sun, that plants, trees and everything on Earth, including a man’s life, depend on the sun.

“When the sky is grey and cloudy, our soul is often mourning, and when the sun comes out, we feel joy and the life seems better. If the sun went out, life on Earth would end in the twinkling of an eye, because everything that lives and moves on our planet, exists due to solar energy.

“The spiritual world has its own Sun – it is the Lord... He is the Giver of Life and nourishes every living thing. Our world will exist because God wants it to. And when He wishes, the history of mankind and the whole universe will roll up like a scroll and will come to its end. Then God will take us all to new life, even more wonderful.

“His Divine life-giving presence fills our life in the Church. When the Lord Jesus Christ came in the flesh, many people thought He was an ordinary man, and it took time for His disciples to learn the mystery of God, hidden behind the veil of human flesh.

“In order to assure His disciples that He, Lord Jesus Christ, is the Sun of Truth, and in order to strengthen them in faith before His crucifixion, the Saviour took His closest disciples and led them up a high mountain. And there they saw His face transfigure and shine brighter than the sun and his garments become white as light. The disciples were so afraid that they fell to the ground and covered their faces. And then Peter, full of joy, said to the Saviour, “It is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias”, as those two great saints appeared before them and were talking to Jesus about His future passion (cf. Mt 17:1-9).

“Each of us partakes of the Divine light, first of all, through participation in church sacraments. Sometimes, during the services, we feel that heaven opens wide, clouds disappear and the light directs its Divine beams at our hearts. We feel it when we gather together to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, when we partake of the Eucharist. Then this light comes into us, it begins to shine within us and enlightens our human earthly nature with its Divine energy.

“It is the miracle of the Transfiguration that occurred with the Lord and that occurs with people in the Church. And this miracle comes true thanks to our participation in church sacraments.”

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