On the Feast of the Holy Trinity Italian Ambassador prayed at the Liturgy in the Church of the ‘Joy to All the Afflicted’ Icon of the Mother of God in Bolshaya Ordynka street



On 23 June 2013, the Feast of the Holy Trinity, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, DECR chairman, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the ‘Joy to All the Afflicted’ Icon of the Mother of God in Bolshaya Ordynka street in Moscow. Concelebrating with Metropolitan Hilarion were clerics of the Church.

Attending the festive Divine service was H.E. Mr. Antonio Zanardi Landi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Italian Republic to the Russian Federation.

After the Liturgy, Metropolitan Hilarion addressed all those present with a homily, saying in particular:

‘In the prayer which we have just heard Pentecost is called a concluding feast. It concludes a long

period of the liturgical year which began with the Feast of the Nativity of Christ; Great Lent, the Holy Week and the Feast of the Resurrection followed. And finally we, together with the whole Holy Church, have come to the Feast of Pentecost. It is called concluding because on the Day of Pentecost Jesus Christ completed his mission on earth.

'During the Last Supper He promised His disciples to give them another Comforter and on the Day of Pentecost He sent Him down upon His holy disciples and apostles. An amazing miracle happened which cannot be described in any language: all the people who heard the apostles' preaching, understood every single word, no matter what country they had come from. And on that very day the apostles themselves understood completely what the Lord had been telling them but for what their ears had remained closed: they are called to fulfill their apostolic mission. So, "their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" (Psalm 19:4). Having begun their preaching in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, the apostles preached Christ to the whole world.

'The Acts of the Apostles tell us about the first period in the life of the Holy Church. Jesus Christ was not physically present among His disciples but they felt His presence at every Eucharist, as they knew that it was not an apostle who broke the bread but the Lord Himself, by hands of an apostle, offered them His Body and Blood. This sense of God's presence, sense that Christ invisible is present among His disciples, was conveyed from one generation to another and has come to us. And today Pentecost is being constantly celebrated in the Church of Christ, not only in Jerusalem, but in any city, town or village where a church is being built and where the Holy Sacraments are being celebrated. Everywhere and anytime, by the prayers of a priest and God's people, the Holy Spirit, when necessary, descends and revives human life. It is the Holy Spirit Who, by a priest's prayer, transforms bread and wine into Christ's Body and Blood. And it is the Holy Spirit Who acts in the Sacrament of Ordination when a layman becomes a deacon, a deacon becomes a priest, and a priest becomes a bishop.

'Today, in our kneeling prayer, we have glorified the Giver of all good, glorified God the Father for sending His only-begotten Son to the world to save our souls, glorified the Son of God for saving us by His suffering, and glorified the Holy Spirit Who, thanks to the redemptional deed of the Saviour, descended and continues to act among us. Let us ask the Lord to strengthen us so that we could be His apostles and to grant us His grace so that we could hear what He wants to say. Let us pray to God to lead us on the way of salvation so that we would not wander form this path, but so that our preaching would attract more and more people to the Church of Christ and we would all reach the Kingdom of God. Amen.'

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