



DECR chairman visits Leipzig

On 24 April 2013, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, who is on a working visit to Germany upon the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, arrived in Leipzig.

In Leipzig, Metropolitan Hilarion, accompanied by Archbishop Longin of Klin, representative of the Russian Orthodox Church in Germany, and by archpriest Sergiy Zvonarev, DECR secretary for far abroad countries, met with Mr. Burkhard Jung, Lord Mayor of Leipzig. They were joined in the meeting by archpriest Alexiy Tomiuk, rector of the Memorial Church of St Alexius, and by representatives of the Consulate General of Russia in Leipzig.

The DECR chairman told the Lord Mayor that the programme of his visit to Germany includes the visit to the Memorial Church of St Alexius in Leipzig which attracts the Russian-speaking Diaspora and is committed to spreading Russian spiritual culture. As Metropolitan Hilarion noted, the Russian Church of St Alexius serves as a historical token of the Russian-German friendship, reminding people of the event which happened two hundred years ago – the Battle of the Nations in which Russian and German soldiers were fighting side by side. According to the DECR chairman, recollections of old glorious days can contribute to the strengthening of relations between the people of two countries. Metropolitan Hilarion thanked Leipzig authorities for the assistance in restoring the Church of St Alexius and expressed his hope that they would continue to render assistance to the Russian Church's parish.

That same day, the DECR chairman, accompanied by archpriest Alexiy Tomiuk, visited the Memorial Church of St Alexius in Leipzig where he said a litiya for the repose of the souls of the Russian warriors who had fallen in the Battle of Leipzig in 1813. Singing at the requiem service was the Moscow Synodal Choir conducted by Alexei Puzakov.

After the litiya, Metropolitan Hilarion addressed all those present with a homily in which he called the parishioners to revere the memory of the fallen warriors and to cling firmly to the Orthodox faith. Later, Metropolitan Hilarion laid wreaths at the burial place of soldiers and officers of the Russian army.

In the evening, a concert of the Moscow Synodal Choir took place at the Thomaskirche, a Lutheran church in which Johann Sebastian Bach had worked as a cantor. The concert was timed to the celebrations of the centenary of the Memorial Church of St Alexius in Leipzig. The Moscow Synodal

Choir performed Bach's and Metropolitan Hilarion's compositions, as well as Russian folk songs. The concert was held with the support of the Russian Ministry of Culture and the 'Petersburg Dialogue' Russian-German forum. Among those present at the concert were Mr. Vyacheslav Logutov, Consul General of Russia in Leipzig, and numerous representatives of the Russian-speaking Diaspora.

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