Metropolitan Hilarion completes his working visit to Kazakhstan



On 20 February 2013, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, chairman of the Synodal Biblical and Theological Commission, rector of the Ss Cyril and Methodius School for Post-Graduate and Doctoral Studies, completed his visit to the Republic of Kazakhstan. The main purpose of Metropolitan Hilarion's visit to Kazakhstan was to carry out field courses of professional development for bishops of the metropolitan area of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Republic of Kazakhstan, of the metropolitan area of Central Asia and of Azerbaijan.

The last day of the visit began with Metropolitan Hilarion's press-conference at the National Press Club in Astana, dedicated to the courses of professional development which had been organized with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. Taking part in the press-conference were also Metropolitan Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan and Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Central Asia.

After that, Metropolitan Hilarion, accompanied by the heads of the metropolitan areas of Kazakhstan and Central Asia, met with representatives of the Kazakh public authorities. The hierarchs also visited the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Kazakhstan and met with H.E. Mr. Mikhail Bocharnikov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Kazakhstan, and members of the diplomatic corps.

In the afternoon, representatives of the diplomatic missions in the Republic of Kazakhstan attended a dinner at the Sts Cyril and Methodius Religious and Cultural Centre in Astana. The DECR chairman discussed various issues of international relations with Ambassadors of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, the USA, Canada, France, and Austria.

After the dinner, Metropolitan Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan presented Metropolitan Hilarion with the Order "For Services to the Orthodox Church in Kazakhstan". The decision to award Metropolitan Hilarion was taken by the Synod of the metropolitan area in Kazakhstan.

In the evening, Metropolitan Hilarion, accompanied by archpriest Vladimir Shmaliy, vice-rector of the Postgraduate School and secretary of the Synodal Biblical and Theological Commission (SBTC), and A. Shishkov, research scholar of the SBTC, left for Moscow. At the airport the DECR chairman was seen off by Metropolitan Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan.

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