



## Delegation of the Georgian Orthodox Church visits Russia

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A delegation of the Georgian Orthodox Church arrived in Moscow on 11 December 2012 with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Beatitude Catholicos Patriarch Iliya II of Georgia. The delegation includes Metropolitan Dimitry of Batumi and Lazeti, Metropolitan Gerasim of Zugdidi and Tsaishi, chairman of the Foreign Department of the Georgian Patriarchate, and Prof. Givi Gambashidze.

On December 12, Metropolitan Gerasim celebrated requiem service at the tomb of the late-lamented Patriarch Alexy II in the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Epiphany in Yelokhovo.

On December 13, the commemoration day of St. Andrew the First-Called, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, and Metropolitan Gerasim of Zugdidi and Tsaishi, chairman of the Foreign Department of the Georgian Patriarchate, conducted a lesser blessing of the Church of the Meeting of the Lord. The Church occupies the ground floor of the Great Cathedral of Donskoy Monastery.

The service was conducted in the Church Slavonic and Georgian languages; the Donskoy Monastery's choir and the Georgian choir of the Church of St. George the Great Martyr sang.

After the Liturgy, Metropolitan Hilarion addressed the guests from Georgia and the worshippers, saying *inter alia* that the peoples of Russia and Georgia had experienced difficult time, as Georgia was surrounded by enemies, and it was with the aid of Russia that it was saved and kept the Orthodox faith that had always been the core of life in Georgia.

The DECR chairman invited all the worshippers to come to this church, a great shrine of the Russian and Georgian people, to pray for our predecessors and particularly for those who are buried here.

Metropolitan Gerasim greeted Metropolitan Hilarion and all those present on behalf of the delegation, conveyed blessings from His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos Patriarch Iliya II of All Georgia and an invitation to attend celebration of the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his primatial ministry and his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday next year.

After the Liturgy, Metropolitan Hilarion venerated the relics of St. Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow.

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