Metropolitan Hilarion officiates at Divine Liturgy in Chicago Cathedral of the Russian Church Abroad

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On 28 October 2012, the 21st Sunday after Pentecost, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, currently on a visit to the USA with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, officiated at the Divine Liturgy in the Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral of the Chicago and Mid-America diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR).

Concelebrating with Metropolitan Hilarion were Archbishop Justinian of Naro-Fominsk, Administrator of the Patriarchal parishes in the USA; Bishop Peter of Cleveland, Administrator of the Chicago and Mid-America diocese of the ROCOR; the Very Revd. John Behr, dean of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (OCA), and clerics of the cathedral. Archbishop Alypy of Chicago and Mid-America (ROCOR) prayed at the divine service.

After the prayer before the ambo, Metropolitan Hilarion addressed the worshippers. He referred to the Parable of the Sower (Mt 13:3-8) and said that all people hear the Word of God and anyone can respond to it. Though not all people do so, but "always and everywhere there are those who perceive Gospel news with gratitude, are striving to hear the words of the Lord, realize them in their life and to structure it in accordance with the commandments of Christ.

"These people comprise church community. Christ said about them: 'You are salt to the world… You are light for all the world' (Mt 5:13-14). They are not many, but they willing to sacrifice their life for fulfilling the commandment s of Christ so that what He has sown spreads throughout the earth. We do not know about the crop, but we should sow, and the Lord will take care of the crop.

'Many generations of believers have sown the Word of God in America, and the churches built in cities and villages on the American continent are the fruits of this salutary sowing.

"This cathedral is also a crop of the salutary sowing. Those who preached the Word of God not only by words, by their life, had inspired people who have come here and have become a church community.

"Let all of us remember that the Lord has brought us to His Church so that we may be saved and so that thousands around us may be saved, as St. Seraphim of Sarov said. The Lord has called us to the

Church so that we can be the sowers, no matter on what kind of soil the seed falls.

“The American soil is a good soil, which produced a good crop, but we should work even harder to enlighten people with the light of Christ’s truth in order to preserve Christian faith among our parishioners, including children, to pass it to those who will come after us.

“Let us beseech the Lord to give us strength to tirelessly sow the Word of God, to preach His good tidings, to be good Christians and go along the way that leads us to the Heavenly Kingdom. Amen.”

After the divine service, Bishop Peter of Cleveland thanked Metropolitan Hilarion for concelebration and asked him to convey greetings and best wishes to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill. He added: We ask for his holy prayers and blessing for our labours.”

Metropolitan Hilarion donated an icon of the Holy Virgin to the cathedral.

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