



Metropolitan Hilarion celebrates at the Russian Monastery on Mount Athos

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Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), currently on pilgrimage to the Holy Mount Athos, visited the Russian monastery of St. Panteleimon. On 11 October 2012, the commemoration day of St. Chariton the Confessor, and Ss Cyril and Maria of Radonezh, he officiated at the Divine Liturgy in the Church of St. Panteleimon. Concelebrating were Archbishop Feognost of Sergiev Posad, head of the Synodal Department for Monasteries; hieromonk Makarios, father confessor of St. Panteleimon's monastery; Rev. Kirill Tatarka, secretary of the Hungarian diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church, and hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), a DECR staff member.

Brethren and many pilgrims, including laymen who accompanied the DECR chairman, prayed at the divine service, after which the guests were invited to fraternal repast. This being over, Metropolitan Hilarion addressed the brethren.

He said: 'The monastery of the Great Martyr Panteleimon has always attracted pilgrims from Russia. It is not fortuitous that we come to the monastery, as monastic life has been thriving here for a thousand years, giving an example to monks, priests, and laymen. We do hope that monks of the Holy Mount Athos will remain the custodians of monastic life and successors of the holy fathers and their teaching. We hope that you will put this teaching into practice and that monasticism will flourish in Holy Russia and life of the human race will continue in this world through your prayers.'

Metropolitan Hilarion wished the brethren God's help and wise guidance on their way to salvation and called them not to forget that millions of people in the world need their prayers.

Metropolitan Hilarion presented an icon of St. Isaac the Syrian to the monastery.

Later in the day, the DECR chairman and his suite departed for Uranopolis.