Metropolitan Hilarion addresses the 12th International Assumption Readings in Kiev

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On September 25, 2012, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations and rector of the Sts Cyril and Methodius Post-Graduate and Doctoral School, arrived in Kiev, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

Upon his arrival, he visited the St. Panteleimon Monastery in Feofania, where he met with His Beatitude Vladimir, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine.

In the afternoon the DECR chairman took part in the work of the 12th International Assumption Readings held on the theme 'Witness: Traditions, Forms, Names'. He presented a paper on 'Martyrdom as Witness: On New Martyrs and Today's Persecution against Christians'.

In his presentation, Metropolitan Hilarion noted in particular that 'for Christians, martyrs are first of all confessors of the faith… Martyrdom is daily and hourly witness to Christ'. His Eminence reminded the participants that the new martyrs of the 20th century became true successors of the early martyrs.

He drew the participants' attention to the fact that 'today we experience again a new wave of hate towards Christianity…. Acts of vandalism against our shrines have been committed both in Russia and Ukraine'. He underscored that today 'Christians in many parts of the world have experienced hardships and shed blood for their right to live freely according to God's commandments and to be named followers of Christ'.

A considerable part of Metropolitan Hilarion's presentation was devoted to a description of the situation concerning the persecution against Christians in the Middle East countries and the actions undertaken today by the Russian Orthodox Church to help relieve their suffering. His Eminence noted in particular that 'today Orthodox Christians in the countries united by the notion of Holy Rus', first of all Ukraine and Russia, bear a great historical responsibility for the fate of their brothers and sisters in the Middle East'.

In conclusion of his presentation, Metropolitan Hilarion called the listeners to pray for the persecuted brothers in the faith 'so that the All-Merciful Lord may give those who suffer and are persecuted hope and consolation, so that they, feeling the help and compassion coming from their geographically remote but spiritually close brothers and sisters, may through God's grace find strength to continue walking along the path of steadfastness in the faith'.

During the Readings, Metropolitan Hilarion met with some participants including Prof. Archimandrite John Manoussakis of the Holy Cross college in Massachusetts, USA, A. Filonenko, associate professor at the Karazin National University, and V. Khromts, associated professor of the Dragomanov Pedagogic University in Kiev.

DECR Communication Service

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