Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk meets with Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna Romanova and Grand Duke George Mikhailovich

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On September 3, 2012, Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna Romanova and Grand Duke George Mikhailovich Romanov visited the Church of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted in Moscow. The guests were welcomed by the rector of the church, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations.

His Eminence told the guests about the church and its shrines. The high guests bowed before the venerated Icon of the Heavenly Queen the Joy to All the Afflicted.

Then the Office for the Dead was said for those who fell in action in the 1812 Patriotic War.

After the service, the head of the Russian Imperial Family and Metropolitan Hilarion had a talk at the parish house. The Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna presented the archpastor with the Order of St. Ann (1st degree).

Metropolitan Hilarion, on his part, thanked the high guest, noting that even in the remote times when atheism prevailed in Russia, he honoured the Royal Passion-Bearers. 'At that time, nobody could foresee that sometime they would be ranked among the saints and would be nationally honoured. I am glad that the link of times has been restored and that today members of the Imperial family are our representatives before the Lord's throne', he said.

‘I am glad to greet you as Head of the Russian Imperial Family in our church dedicated to the Icon of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted’, His Eminence continued, ‘And in thanking you for the high award, I would like to wish you God’s help in your service lying first of all in the preservation and continuation of bonds with the past Russia which, I hope, has not passed for good but is returning to us today in the images of saints, in churches we restore and in the revival of religious life going on in our Motherland’.

Discussed during the talk were various problems of life and service of the Church in the modern world, as well as commemorative events marking the 200th anniversary of the 1812 Patriotic War.

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