Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk celebrates Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted in San Francisco

On August 28, 2012, the Day of the Dormition of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, who is on a visit to the USA with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, led the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the Russian Church Outside Russia's Cathedral of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted in San Francisco.

Among his concelebrants were the First Hierarch of the Russian Church Outside Russia, Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York; Metropolitan Jonah, the former primate of the Orthodox Church in America; Archbishop Cyril of San Francisco (ROCOR); Archbishop Justinian of Naro-Fominsk, administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA; Archbishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West (Orthodox Church in America); and Bishop Theodosius of Seattle (ROCOR). Among the worshippers was Russia's General Consul in San Francisco V. Vinokurov.

After the Prayer Behind the Ambo, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk delivered a pastoral homily, saying in particular:

'We have come from various parts of the world: Russia and other countries in Europe, from various parts of America, from Australia, New Zealand, Mexico and other countries of the world. We have been led by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the love of the Church of Christ, the love of our common Mother, the Most Holy Mother of God, and the awareness that we belong to one body, one church home standing on the cornerstone – our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

'Standing before the grave of the Most Holy Theotokos, we first of all come to think over the meaning of our human life and our death. And nothing can give us greater consolation, at the thought of the end of our life, and greater awareness of the meaning of death than the grave of the Most Holy Theotokos. It is not a grave at which people assemble to grieve the dead and weep for themselves as remaining in this world only temporarily. At this grave we contemplate the upper world and praise the Most Holy Theotokos whose death was not a death but Dormition and the move to the eternal and better life.

'We pray that our death too could not be death but dormition and the move to eternal life in which our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ awaits every one of us.

‘When we look at the icon of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos we see Her stretched beautifully on Her deathbed, we see the Lord Jesus Christ standing next to Her, lovingly taking in His hands Her soul depicted as an infant in swaddling clothes. Thus a death becomes a birth into a new life, and the last day of an earthly life becomes the first day of life in eternity.

‘Standing before this grave, we realize that we are created not to live a short life and die, but we are created for eternity, and our temporal existence is only preparation for it. We realize that death is not a tragic and joyless event, but the move to eternal life. And when we die we are not alone but with Christ, only if in our temporal life too we have not been on our own but lived with Christ’.

The DECR chairman presented Archbishop Cyril with the Order of St. Sergius of Radonezh awarded in recognition of his zealous work for the good of the Church and on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Fort Ross.

Archbishop Cyril warmly thanked Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, for the gift and the high award. In his turn, he awarded General Consul Vinokurov and his wife the Order of St. John of San Francisco (II and III degrees).

DECR Communication Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/53793/