DECR chairman takes part in International Conference “Stolypin Readings. Ways of Modernizing Russia. From Stolypin to Modernity”

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On 17 April 2012, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations, took part in international conference “Stolypin Readings. Ways of Modernizing Russia. From Stolypin to Modernity” held at the Russian Presidential Academy and Public Administration. The conference was organized by the Academy, The Russian Ministry of Economic Development and the Foundation for Studying Pyotr Stolypin’s Heritage.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Vladislav Surkov opened the conference by a welcoming speech in which he underscored that “respect for homeland, for its traditions and for national character along with an attempt to make necessary transformations in the interests of the nation” were the most important features of Stolypin’s policy.

In his report, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk noted that Russia most certainly was in need of economic and political modernization. He believes, however, that it is impossible to yield an economic effect of modernization without its moral dimension “as the problems piled up by our country during last century are of economic and also of ideological and ethical character.” Metropolitan Hilarion added that the “religious and moral foundations of social life had been rooted out during the years of state atheism in our country and replaced by a fragile morality of a Soviet man partly based on Christian ethical foundations.” This morality lost its meaning for our citizens after the Soviet Union had collapsed. “Many people have lost orientation and moral system of co-ordinates and found themselves in ideological vacuum. Old values look naïve in the tough world of economic rationalism and struggle for survival.”

Metropolitan Hilarion believes that any transformation, be at the national level, in the family, or in a person’s private life, should be attended by the perfection of human spirit and moral qualities. He also believes that we shall not build a strong state before we learn to build our own life on the firm foundation of Christian moral values.

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