Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk addresses the staff of Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation

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On 21 December 2011, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR) and rector of the Ss Cyril and Methodius Postgraduate and Doctoral School, met with the staff of the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation. The meeting was arranged in the framework of the Agreement on Cooperation signed by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Mr. Sergei Stepashin, chairman of the Accounts Chamber, on 10 June 2010.

Before the meeting, Metropolitan Hilarion visited the home chapel of St. Sergius of Radonezh and venerated the icon of the saint. Ms. Ye. Agapova, assistant to the chairman of the Accounts Chamber, told him about the life of the church community.

Sergei Stepashin greeted Metropolitan Hilarion on behalf of the staff at the conference hall.

In his address on the "Spirituality and Moral Control as Counteraction against Corruption", the DECR chairman mentioned the great significance of religious factor in the struggle against this dangerous disease of our society and explained: "The Church has always called both believers and non-believers not to succumb to the vices of the greed of money, theft and bribery, which are leading people to spiritual death. In the Old and New Testaments we can find reprimands and direct ban on that what is now called corruption, for instance: "You must not distort justice; you must not show partiality; and you must not accept bribes, for the bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of those who are in the right" (Deut 16:19), or "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favour is better than silver or gold" (Prov 22:1). In the New Testament times St. Paul warned against the danger of enrichment as the end in itself: "Those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by mane senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains" (1 Tim 6:9-10).

Metropolitan Hilarion expressed his concern for secular tendencies prevailing in West European society and partly in Russia. "Moral vacuum cannot exist for long. If the notions of good and evil are eroded and the system of value orientations is destroyed, they are replaced by anti-values, and relativism and

nihilism are brought about with all the consequences ensuing therefrom," he underscored.

Metropolitan Hilarion answered questions from the audience.

The chairman of the Accounts Chamber thanked the DECR chairman for his address, congratulated him on the upcoming New Year and the feast of the Nativity of Christ and invited him to take part in the celebration of the 130th anniversary of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society to be held next year.

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