



## **Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk visits Russian Monastery of St. Panteleimon on Mt. Athos**

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On 16-17 December 2011, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, and his suite visited the Russian Monastery of St. Panteleimon on the Holy Mountain of Athos.

On their way to the monastery, they visited the cell of St. Modestus of Jerusalem and were warmly welcomed by hieromonk Abraham and twelve brethren, mostly Russian-speaking. The cell belongs to the Simonopetra Monastery.

On the night of December 17, the commemoration day of the Great Martyr Barbara and St. John of Damascus, Metropolitan Hilarion prayed at the Midnight service, read six psalms and canon at Matins at the Intercession church of the Monastery of St. Panteleimon. He celebrated Divine Liturgy together with Archbishop Feognost of Sergiev Posad, abbot of the Laura of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius, brethren of the monastery and ordained members of the pilgrims' group.

The DECR chairman addressed the worshippers and conveyed greetings from Patriarch Kirill, who wished the brethren wellbeing and God's help and asked for incessant prayers for the Russian Orthodox Church. Metropolitan Hilarion delivered a sermon.

At the repast after the divine service, he called the brethren to follow the steps of St. John of Damascus, combining monastic deeds and prayers with the reading of the Holy Fathers and with studies in theology.

The pilgrims venerated the precious head of the Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon and other holy objects kept in the monastery.

Metropolitan Hilarion visited the library and got acquainted with the monastery's plans of publications.

As a token of his visit to the Holy Mountain, he presented the monastery with the three last volumes of 'Orthodox Encyclopedia', one of them containing an article about St. John of Damascus.