



Metropolitan Hilarion celebrates at the place where miracle-working Icon of Our Lady of Kazan was found

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On November 3, 2011, the eve of the Day of the Icon of Our Lady of Kazan, Metropolitan Hilarion, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, officiated at All-Night Vigil at the Monastery of Our Lady of Kazan, which was built at the place where the miracle-working icon was found in the 16th century. The monastery also keeps the venerated copy of the Icon of Our Lady of Kazan, which had been kept in the Vatican for a long time and which was handed over to the Russian Orthodox Church in 2005. Since that time it has remained in Kazan.

Metropolitan Hilarion was welcomed by Abbot Pitirim (Rybanin) with the brethren.

Speaking after the service, Father Pitirim said that for those who lived in Kazan their prayer together with Metropolitan Hilarion at the place where the miracle-working icon had been found was a significant event. He also expressed hope that Metropolitan Hilarion would come for the 400th anniversary of the liberation of Moscow from invaders which marked the end of the Time of Trouble. As is known, it was from Kazan that the miracle-working icon was sent the people's volunteer corps led by Prince Dmitry Pozharsky.

In his response, Metropolitan Hilarion said in particular,

'It is my first visit to Tatarstan, and I am glad that I could come today to this monastery built on the place where the Icon of Our Lady of Kazan had appeared. Many glorious events in the history of our homeland are associated with this icon, among them her liberation from the Polish rule, which we will celebrate next year.

We know about the Time of Trouble from books and textbooks on history, and it is difficult for us to image what a threat hung over Russia at that time. Foreign invaders seized her very heart, the Moscow Kremlin, and we believe that it was thanks to the intercession of the Mother of God that the invasion was stopped and the invaders were driven out.

For me it is especially moving to see today the icon about which I have heard so much as a participant in the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue and negotiations. This icon was in the Vatican for a long time and then it was handed over to the late Patriarch Alexy II and he handed it over to this city, its proper place.

The Orthodox faith has saved our homeland on many occasions; it will save each. Therefore come as often as you can to the church of God, participate in the church sacraments, partake of the Holy Mysteries of Christ, confess your sins to God, and the Lord will heal your physical and spiritual illnesses, and the Most Holy Mother of God, through her grace-giving and miracle-working icon, will lead you on the way to the Heavenly Kingdom'.

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