Metropolitan Hilarion: We all are aboard one and the same ship called the Church of Christ

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On 7 October 2011, the eve of the commemoration day of the demise of St. Sergius, Hegumen of Radonezh and Wonderworker of All Russia (+1392), Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, celebrated the All-Night Vigil at the Church of the Holy Spirit in the Laura of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius.

On October 8, the feast day, Metropolitan Hilarion celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the same church together with Archbishop Guriy of Novogrudok and Lida, Bishop Guriy of Petropavlovsk and Bulayevo, Bishop Feofilakt of Pyatigorsk and Cherkessk, and Bishop Iliya of Ruzayevka.

Metropolitan Hilarion delivered a homily, saying:

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit!

"On the commemoration day of St. Sergius, Hegumen of Radonezh and Wonderworker of All Russia, we hear the words of St. Paul at the Divine Liturgy: 'Bear one another's burdens and in his way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2).

'How these words relate to the commemoration day of the great Russian saint? St. Sergius began his monastic deeds from retreating to the dense forest not to bear someone's burdens, but to take the burden of Christ, to spend his days in prayer and solitude.

"Yet, the Lord judged that the spiritual light, which has illumined St. Sergius, should spread from the Radonezh forest over the entire land of Russia. First, those who wanted to be fasters began to come to the saint. When the community of the Holy Trinity has come to life, many laymen used to come here who were seeking counsel and consolation.

'To bear one another's burdens to in this way fulfill the law of Christ is a law of any community of people, and especially of monks. Be it three, thirty-three, or three hundred monks, each monastery is a large spiritual family.

'It is not fortuitous that hegumen of the Russian land dedicated his monastery to the Holy Trinity. It is not by chance that St. Andrei Rublev, inspired by the ideal that St. Sergius set for his monks, pained the

Holy Trinity as a symbol of love and spiritual unity, which should reign among people.

‘It is God’s love that gives people strength to bear one another’s burdens, to share one another’s joys, sorrows, and interests. We must remember that we all are aboard one and the same ship called the Church of Christ.

‘We should not forget that we perish and are saved together. Each of us should care for the others. If one falls, the other should help him to get up; if one sins, the other should set him in the right way.

‘May God grant us to perceive our church community as one ship sailing to the Heavenly Kingdom. May God grant us to bear one another’s burdens, as the apostles and holy fathers have taught us to do and as St. Sergius, the Wonderworker of All Russia has shown us.’

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