Metropolitan Hilarion becomes chairman of Synodal Biblical and Theological Commission

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, is appointed, as chairman of the Synodal Biblical and Theological Commission. This decision was made by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church during the first day of the winter session on October 5, 2011.

The Holy Synod granted the request of Metropolitan Filaret of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarchal Exarch for All Belarus, to relieve him of his duty as chairman of the Synodal Biblical and Theological Commission. The Synod thanked Metropolitan Filaret for his longtime work as chairman of the Commission, stressing that during his tenure the internal and international theological discussion was raised to a high level, a serious dialogue was organized between church scholars and secular scientists and theological questions posed before the Commission by the Supreme Authority were answered.

Metropolitan Hilarion has worked as member of the Commission since 1996. He is a holder of academic degrees in theology and philosophy from several universities in Russia and other countries. In particular, he is doctor of philosophy of the University of Oxford, doctor of theology of the St. Sergius Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris, honorary doctor of theology of the Faculty of Theology, University of Catalonia, honorary professor of the Russian Christian Humanitarian Academy and professor of Freiburg University, Switzerland.

Metropolitan Hilarion is also chairman of the editorial board of the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, chairman of the editorial board of *Tserkov i Vremya* magazine, Moscow, member of the editorial boards of the magazines *Bogoslovskie trudy*, Moscow, *Studia Monastica*, Barcelona, and the scientific-historical series *Vizantijskaya biblioteka*, St. Petersburg.

He is an author of over 700 publications including monographs on patristics, dogmatic theology and history of the Church, as well as translations of patristic works from Greek and Syrian. In 2005, Metropolitan Hilarion was awarded the St. Macarius Prize for his work 'The Holy Mystery of the Church. An Introduction to the History and Problems of Onomatodoxic Polemics'.

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The Synodal Theological Commission was established by the Holy Synod decision of December 28,

1993. In 2009, it was renamed as Synodal Biblical and Theological Commission.

The Commission is a permanent working advisory and analytical body of the Holy Synod. It has the following tasks:

- to carry out instructions of the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Holy Synod and other church institutions to consider particular theological and doctrinal issues;
- to make theological analysis of topical problems in the life of the Russian Orthodox Church;
- to coordinate academic theological work carried out by Synodal departments, dioceses and other church structures.

The membership of the Commission is approved by a decision of the Holy Synod. It members are theologians from among the episcopate, clergy and laity who are professors of theological schools and staff members of theological, educational and Synodal establishments of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Commission involves experts and consultants in its work.

Metropolitan Filaret was the first chairman of the Commission. He is an author of a great number of theological works and publications and holder of academic degrees in theology from several universities.

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