Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk meets with Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem

On August 25, 2011, His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of the Holy City of Jerusalem, received Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, who came to the Holy Land for a working visit with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

Metropolitan Hilarion conveyed to His Beatitude words of greetings and support from the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church and thanked him for the attention he gave to pilgrims who come in a great number to the Holy Land from the Moscow Patriarchate.

During their talk which lasted for two hours they discussed in detail a wide range of issues concerning both bilateral relations between the Patriarchates of Jerusalem and Moscow and urgent problems of pan-Orthodox significance.

Patriarch Theophilos pointed to the everlasting importance which the service carried out by the Patriarchate of Jerusalem has for Orthodox Christians throughout the world, making a special mentioned of the contribution his Patriarchate makes to the cause of interreligious peace, the development of dialogue between religious leaders and preservation of Christian presence and witness in the Middle East.

In the context of their discussion on the situation of Christians in the Middle East, Metropolitan Hilarion gave His Holiness the text of the Statement of the Russian Orthodox Church's Holy Synod on the Growing Manifestations of Christianophibia in the World translated in various languages and emphasized that the Russian Church with great concern followed closely the dangerous development of the political situation in several countries of the Middle East.

Patriarch Theophilos thanked the DECR chairman for the information and told him about the meeting of the Primates of the Orthodox Churches of Antioch, Jerusalem and Cyprus and a representative of the Church of Alexandria that took place on August 1 in Jordan to discuss the situation in the Middle East. They established an Initiative of the Heads of Orthodox Churches in the Middle East with the task to ensure closer coordination of the regional inter-Orthodox cooperation. The same range of issues is planned to be discussed by the Heads of the Churches of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Cyprus at their forthcoming meeting on September 1, 2011, in Istanbul.

His Beatitude asked Metropolitan Hilarion to convey his best wishes to Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, noting that he closely followed the primatial work of His Holiness to promote the spiritual revival of people in Russia and other countries within the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Participating in the talk were Archbishop Aristarchos of Constantina, elder chief secretary of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman, Archimandrite Isidore Minaev, deputy head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, Hierodeacon Ioann Kopeikin, assistant to the DECR chairman, and Mr. L. Sevastyanov, executive director of the St. Gregory the Theologian Charity, which rendered support to the preparations of the trip.

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