



Metropolitan Hilarion continues his stay at the Island of Gökçeada (Imbros)

On August 21, 2011, His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, attended the celebration of Baptism at the church of the Assumption at the Agridia village. The sacrament was administered by Metropolitan Cyril of Imbros and Tenedos assisted by the clergy of the metropolis. Numerous villagers and descendants of the Greeks who left the island in the last century mid-60s congregated for the event.

On August 22, the two hierarchs visited Patriarch Bartholomew's native village of Holy Theodore. Patriarch Bartholomew showed Metropolitan Hilarion the places where he spent his childhood and youth – the village churches in which His Holiness used to worship and serve as an altar boy and the school he used to attend. They also visited the ecological park designed personally by Patriarch Bartholomew and climbed up the nearby hill to reach the chapels of St. Michael and the Holy Martyr Charlampius.

In the evening, Patriarch Bartholomew and Metropolitan Hilarion worshipped at vespers at the church of the Assumption in His Holiness's village. After the service, Patriarch Bartholomew greeted his guest, saying,

'This year we are not alone at the Holy Theodore village as we have remarkable guests with us. The delegation of the most holy sister Russian Orthodox Church is led by a worthy hierarch, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk. He knows the Greek language, he is young – he is only 45, but he is a distinguished hierarch with a brilliant theological education he had received both in Russia and Great Britain. He is the author of many books and a composer. The Lord has endowed him with many gifts. And for two and a half years now he has headed the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate. He has had to travel a great deal, carrying out the mission to which the Church has called him. Through his Department we develop good relations between our two Patriarchates. It does not mean of course that there are no small storm clouds gathering or small problems arising occasionally but we try to overcome and settle them, continuing our harmonious cooperation for the sake of unity and the glory of Orthodoxy and for the sake of our common witness before the modern world'.

During his trip to Imbros, His Eminence Hilarion is accompanied by Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman, and Hierodeacon Ioann (Kopeikin), assistant to the DECR chairman.

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