Metropolitan Hilarion: the fate of Czar's family is inseparable from the fate of the whole people of Russia

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On July 17, 2011, the commemoration day of the Holy Royal Passion-bearers, Metropolitan Hilarion, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the church of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted in Moscow. He was assisted by the parish clergy and ordained staff members of the DECR. Among his concelebrants was also Rev. Dionisy Kazantsev, rector of the church of St. John the Theologian in Campina das Missioes, Brazil.

After the Divine Liturgy, Metropolitan Hilarion delivered the following sermon:

'Dear Brothers and Sisters, today, on the eve of the commemoration day of St. Sergius, the Abbot of Radonezh and Wonder-worker of All Russia, the Church celebrates the memory of St. Andrew Rublev, a great icon-painter and disciple of St. Sergius and monk of St. Sergius's Monastery of the Trinity, and the memory of the Holy Royal Passion-bearers – Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich, Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna, Prince Alexis, Princesses Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia, who suffered martyrdom on that day at the hands of ungodly people.

Reflecting on the fate of the last Russian czar and his family, we see that from the very beginning this man and people tied with him by fate were as if destined to be sacrificed like lambs led to the slaughter. Every heir to the imperial throne inherited power by the right of succession. He did not receive it like it is received today, through elections. Nor did he receive it for some special merits but simply because he was the firstborn son of an emperor and was anointed and through this received God's blessing upon his rule.

The Emperor Nicholas Alexandrovich assumed the reins of government over the Russian Empire at a hard time when the people and the intelligentsia were driven by revolutionary moods, each seeking a 'real' and 'better' future; each having his own recipe for achieving this better future, and the royal throne remained the only holding factor in that situation. And when it was shaken the country was engulfed in a streak of great disasters totally unexpected by those who had offered their recipes and advice for building a better future for Russia. A storm of adversities and violence swept through the country sparing nobody. Having begun with aristocrats, the royal family and other members of the royal house,

the Bolsheviks moved on to the nobility and the clergy and then dispossessed wealthy peasants thus delivering a terrible blow on the whole peasantry. In a word, it was violence against all the people, and there were none who did not suffer from that godless power to this or that extent.

Therefore, when we think about the fate of the royal family we cannot separate them from the fate of the whole people. Indeed, the royal family suffered the same as thousands of other families did. Indeed, repressed were innocent people regardless of their age, sex or social status. The godless ones killed adults and children, men and women, rich and poor, believers and non-believers alike. And when today we remember all Russia's passion-bearers and new confessors we realise that it is impossible to enumerate all their names because many of these names are unknown. We know about the death of the royal family because these people were in the public eye but there were a great number of similar families, similar young men and women who were executed by shooting, killed, thrown down mines, and nobody will ever know their names. Their names however are written at the Lord's heaven.

Historians are still arguing about the role the last emperor played in the fate of the Russian Empire, about whether he ruled rightly and whether he made mistakes. The Church does not argue about it. She does not judge politicians and statesmen. She rather looks at how one lived, how one built his relations with God and how one died. In the fate of the last Russian emperor we can see that, led to the slaughter, he sacrificed his life for his own sins, for the sins of the people and for the sins of our Fatherland. And today all this family, his faithful servants and all those who went the same way of martyrdom and passion-bearing, intercede for our sinful land, for our sinful people so that the Lord may have mercy upon us and may forgive our sins and that our people may at last see the sought-for bright future which they so much wanted to see and which they did not see in the decades of the godless power.

Today our holy Church is being reborn. Atheism and godlessness are out to almost underground. And we believe that this happens through the intercession of those who humbly and without a murmur accepted the suffering that came to their lot, who ascended the Golgotha following Christ, each his or her own, so that they might die with the faith in Christ and come to the other life where they pray for us today. We believe that through their intercession our Church is reviving today and through their intercession our beloved Fatherland will be strengthened and through their intercession each of us is restored to the feat of following the way to the heavenly Kingdom and taking along our children and grandchildren.

I wish that through the intercession of holy new martyrs and confessors of Russia we all may walk this long path to meet our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.'

DECR Communication Service

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