Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk begins his visit to Paraguay

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In the evening of 30 June 2011, Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), arrived in Acunción at the invitation of the government of Paraguay and with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to take part in the celebration of the 200th independence anniversary.

Meeting Metropolitan Hilarion at the VIP hall were Metropolitan Platon of Argentina and South America S. Reschikov, charge d'affaires a.i. of the Russian Federation in Paraguay; I. Fleisher, honorary consul of Russian to Paraguay; D. Kravtsov, head of the *Rossotrudnichestvo* (Federal Agency for Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation) representation In Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay; Ms Margarita Orué de Villaba, director of the Department for religious organizations and artistic education of the Paraguay's Ministry of Education and Culture; and representatives of the protocol department of Paraguay's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During his visit, the DECR chairman will celebrate divine services, meet with the leaders of the country and compatriots, and read a lecture at the Catholic University of Paraguay.

His Eminence Hilarion is accompanied by his assistant hierodeacon Ioann (Kopeikin); Miguel Palacio, a staff member of the DECR secretariat for far abroad countries; Leonid Sevastianov, executive director of the St. Gregory the Theological Charity Foundation; and Orthodox laymen. The visit will last till July 3.

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