Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk: The Church will always speak of eternal values regardless of current fashions and godless standards

On 7 April 2011, the feast of the Annunciation of the Holy Virgin, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Moscow church of the "Joy to All the Afflicted" Icon. Concelebrating were ordained DECR staff members and parish clergy.

Rev. Dimitry Sizonenko, acting DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations, read out the Patriarchal Message to the archpastors, pastors, monks, and all the faithful children of the Russian Orthodox Church on the disaster in Japan.

After the Divine Liturgy, Metropolitan Hilarion addressing the worshippers, saying:

"Today the Orthodox Church celebrates the Annunciation of the Most Holy Mother of God. This Lenten day is linked to the Nativity of Christ nine moths later. We recall how Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary and announced that she will bear the Saviour of the world, our Lord Jesus Christ. We recall that the Holy Virgin was perplexed by his words at first, but when she realized the great mystery, she said: 'Let it be with me according to your word." (Lk 1:38).

"This mystery is beyond human mind. Many tried to comprehend it, but in vain. A great Russian author, Leo Tolstoy, also tried, but failed and rewrote the Gospel, crossing out the story of the Annunciation and many other supernatural stories. This wonderful story of the Incarnation remains incomprehensible for many people today, as it runs contrary to the laws of this world and the standards by which people live now.

"Are there many girls today who could be likened to the Most Holy Virgin Mary in chastity, love of God, prayers and God's church? The majority of girls are living by other laws and standards. They try to be beautiful physically to attract men, using various means, such as provocative clothes, make-up, and even surgery. Their world is far away from the world in which the mystery of the Incarnation was revealed.

"Why has it been revealed? Why the Lord Jesus Christ has found a place for himself on this earth? It has happened because there were such people as the Most Holy Virgin, as Joachim and Anna and the

righteous Elizabeth, who live by their faith in God and did not even try to be better that they were. They humbly endured grief and hoped, first and foremost, on God's might, which revealed in our weakness.

"The feast of the Annunciation reminds us also of motherhood as the main vocation of women, who brought up children while men worked to feed their families. The situation has changed, and children are no longer a priority. Many girls have neither time, nor wish or emotions for giving birth to children as they are preoccupied with gaining material success.

"The Church reminds all of us of spiritual and moral values on which human life has been built during centuries. The Church will always speak of eternal values, such as motherhood, fatherhood, or marital fidelity. Regardless of current fashions and modern godless standards."

Metropolitan Hilarion reminded the worshippers of the message of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill on the natural disaster in Japan that had taken away many human lives and mentioned the yesterday's meeting of the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church with the Ambassador of Japan to the Russian Federation. Metropolitan Hilarion called the believers to respond to the His Holiness' words and make their contribution to the aid to the victims in Japan. He underscored that the aid to those who have suffered and lost their churches and homes was our duty.
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