



## **Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk meets with hierarchs of the Orthodox Church in America**

On March 15, 2011, His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, visited the United States with the blessing of His Holiness, Patriarch Kirill, of Moscow and All Russia.

During his stay in New York, His Eminence visited the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America at Syosset, where he met with their Graces, Bishop Nikon of Boston, Bishop Tikhon of Philadelphia, Secretary of the Holy Synod, Bishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh, Interim Chancellor, Bishop Michael of New York and Bishop Mark of Baltimore. Metropolitan Hilarion, who was accompanied by his deputy, Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, also had the opportunity to meet with some senior representatives of the clergy from various dioceses of the Orthodox Church in America. His Eminence informed those present about the recent meeting of the Inter-Orthodox Preparatory Commission for the Great and Holy Council, which took place in Chambésy, Switzerland, from February 21-26, 2011.

The main point of discussion was the current situation in the Orthodox Church in America. During the discussion, Metropolitan Hilarion reaffirmed the position of the Russian Orthodox Church regarding the autocephaly of the OCA, which, as he emphasized, has remained unchanged since 1970. He also stressed that the Moscow Patriarchate will in no way intervene in the internal affairs of the Orthodox Church in America, and yet, as the Church which consistently and actively defends the autocephaly of the OCA on the inter-Orthodox level, the Russian Orthodox Church needed to be directly informed about the details of the current situation.

The conversations were honest and took place in a friendly and cordial atmosphere.

The hierarchs of the OCA express their gratitude to His Holiness, Patriarch Kirill for his love and concern for the OCA and to His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion for undertaking this visit and for his continued brotherly support.

On his trip to the United States, Metropolitan Hilarion will also meet with His Beatitude, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada Jonah at the request of His Holiness, Patriarch Kirill.

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