Metropolitan Hilarion visits US Library of Congress

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On 10 February 2011, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, visited the US Library of Congress and met with the Librarian of Congress, James H. Billington and representatives of intellectual and religious circles of Washington, including Archbishop emeritus of Washington, Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick; President of the Russian American Christian Institute John Bernbaum; President of the Georgetown University John J. DeGioia; Rector of St. John the Baptist church in Washington, the Very Rev. Victor Potapov (ROCOR); Rector of Washington National Cathedral, the Very Rev. Samuel T. Lloyd; head of the Department of Slavonic Studies Harold M. Leich; and director of the European Reading Room Grant Harris.

Metropolitan Hilarion delivered an address on the Orthodox understanding of beauty and harmony followed by a long discussion of a wide range of questions about church life in Russia at present. Special attention was paid to the role played by the Russian Orthodox Church in social processes both in Russia and other countries included in its canonical territory.

Metropolitan Hilarion underscored that the Russian Orthodox Church in these countries enjoyed a great moral authority and exerted positive influence on the life of people in all strata of society. The influence of the Church and, first and foremost, of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, is more extended than the boundaries of the Church. According to the DECR chairman, His Holiness the Patriarch is a spiritual leader capable of uniting representatives of traditional religious communities and healthy forces in society.

After the talk, Dr. Billington showed Metropolitan Hilarion and his suite copies of Russian theological literature and church periodicals kept in the Library, for instance, the works by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and Metropolitan Hilarion, as well as copies of "The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate," "The Church and the World," "Foma," and other publications issued with the blessing of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

The DECR chairman and Dr. Billington exchanged presents. Metropolitan Hilarion gave the Librarian of Congress the first volume of his new book, *Orthodoxy*, in the English language, and received Dr. Billington's books in Russian and in English.

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