



## **Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk: Our life should be imbued with fiery grace of the Holy Spirit burning any sinful filth**

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On January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Eve of the Epiphany, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), celebrated at the Church of the "Joy to All the Afflicted" Icon of the Mother of God, Bolshaya Ordynka Str. Concelebrating were Rev. Dimitry Ageyev, assistant to the DECR chairman; DECR ordained staff members; and clergy of the church.

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The Moscow Synodal Choir, conducted by an honoured artist of Russia, Alexei Puzakov, sang at the service.

After the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, Metropolitan Hilarion addressed the worshippers with archpastoral homily, explaining particular features of the service celebrated on this day:

"Dear fathers, brothers and sisters! Thirteen parables are read on the Eve of the Epiphany. They tell us of different kinds of God's help to people and of God's miracles. We have heard stories of the creation of the world, of the infant Moses miraculously brought to the Pharaoh and saved to later become the leader of the people of Israel, and of how Israelites walked through the Black Sea. We have also heard how the Lord sank sin in the Jordan River when people were coming to John to be baptized.

"Today we shall perform the Great Blessing of the Waters in commemoration of all mentioned events so that we could have holy water as a source of healing, the water gushing up to eternal life (cf. Jn 4:14).

"All of us have begun our Christian way from the Sacrament of Baptism. The baptismal water is a blessed water, as a baptized person should enter the blessed water to come out of it renewed and transformed with all his sinful filth drowned in it. People would come to St. John the Baptist to receive the baptism of repentance from him, but he said: "One who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the throngs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Lk 3:16).

"We all have been baptized in Christian font and received the baptism from the Lord Jesus Himself. We have been baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire, and our life should be imbued with the fiery grace of the Holy Spirit that burns any sinful filth and transforms human beings from within.

“The holy water that we shall bring home to drink it during the whole year and to sprinkle our apartments with it will be a source of God’s presence. However, we should remember that holy water is only a part of the life of the Church lived by her through centuries to the present day. It is not enough only to drink holy water. The main thing is to never forget of partaking of the Holy Mysteries of Christ. We should come to God’s church as often as our spiritual and physical power allows us to unite with God in the sacrament of Holy Communion. We should unite with God through prayer offered up to Him day and night, and through good deeds we are doing by following the Lord’s commandment to His glory.”

After the homily, Metropolitan Hilarion performed the Office of the Great Blessing of the Waters.

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