



DECR staff members share the joy of Christmas with their chairman

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On January 9th, 2011, the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the 'Joy to All the Afflicted' Icon of the Mother of God, Bolshaya Ordynka Street. Concelebrating with Metropolitan Hilarion were the DECR deputy chairman Archpriest Nikolai Balashov; DECR secretary for Inter-Orthodox relations Rev. Igor Yakimchuk; acting DECR secretary for Inter-Christian relations Rev. Dmitry Sizonenko; assistant to the DECR chairman Rev. Dmitry Ageyev; archimandrite Panaret, rector of the Theological Academy of Heraklion in Crete, Patriarchate of Constantinople; and clerics of the church.

DECR staff member attended the divine service for common Christmas prayer.

Prior to the Divine Liturgy, the archpastor venerated the miraculous "Joy to All the Afflicted" Icon of the Mother of God.

The Moscow Synodal Choir conducted by Alexei Puzakov, an honoured artist of Russia, and the choir of the School of religious singing at the Moscow University's Church of St. Tatiana conducted by S. Markelov sang pieces by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Pavel Chesnokov, and Christmas concert "All angels rejoice in heaven" by archpriest Nikolai Vedernikov.

After the Divine Liturgy, archpriest Nikolai Balashov greeted Metropolitan Hilarion with the Nativity of Christ on behalf of the DECR staff members and gave him a bouquet of roses.

In his address, Metropolitan Hilarion greeted the worshippers and wished the DECR staff members to remember their duty before the Church as their labours are necessary and serve to the glory of God.