



Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk celebrates Divine Liturgy at the representation church of the Orthodox Church in America

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On 7 December 2010, the commemoration day of St. Catherine the Great Martyr, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Church of St. Catherine the Great Martyr in-the-Fields, the Moscow Representation of the Orthodox Church in America.

Concelebrating with Metropolitan Hilarion were archimandrite Zacchaeus (Wood), dean of St. Catherine's Church and representative of the Orthodox Church in America to the Moscow Patriarchate; clergymen including archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR deputy chairman; archpriest Nikolai Krechetov, dean of the Moskvoretsky deanery; archpriest Oleg Klemyshev, dean of the Sretensky deanery; archpriest Vladimir Volgin, rector of the Church of St. Sophia the Holy Wisdom in Sadovniki; archpriest Michał Dudicz, Orthodox chaplain of the Polish Arm and dean of the land forces (Polish Orthodox Church); hegumen Irinei (Tafunya), a cleric of the Moldavian metropolia currently serving in Moscow; and Rev. Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations.

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After the divine service, which was celebrated in the Church Slavonic and English languages, archimandrite Zacchaeus (Wood) warmly greeted Metropolitan Hilarion and gave him liturgical vestments as a gift.

Greetings from His Beatitude Metropolitan Jonah of All America and Canada with the patronal feast of the Moscow Representation of the Orthodox Church in America were read out.

The DECR chairman conveyed the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to the dean, clerics, and parishioners and reminded them that some days ago the Muscovites prayed together with the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church at the relics of St. Catherine the Great Martyr brought to Russia from Mt. Sinai.

Metropolitan Hilarion said: "We feel the presence of St. Catherine at this church dedicated to her. The bright example given by this saint, who, as we know from the prayer read today, surpassed fifty orators

in wisdom, who was not frightened of tortures, but had devoted her entire life to Christ and suffered for him, has been a guiding star on the way leading us to the Heavenly Kingdom."

Metropolitan Hilarion added that the Church of St. Catherine in-the-Fields is very dear to him as he served here for six years. "I remember this church in ruins and the beginning of its restoration. I am happy to see grandeur created by your labours and the labours of those who have spared no efforts for the revival of this church, - Metropolitan Hilarion said, addressing archimandrite Zacchaeus. - A lot has been done, and a lot is to be done. It is difficult to restore and revive a church. This work demands many years and material investments. May God grant this work to be successfully completed to the glory of the Lord."

Metropolitan Hilarion delivered a sermon and cordially greeted the worshippers with the patronal feast. He donated a copy of the "Sign" Icon of the Mother of God painted by protodeacon Alexy Trunin of the Church of the "Joy to All the Afflicted" Icon of the Mother of God.

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