



## **Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk: Relations between Local Churches are truly fraternal**

On November 25, Metropolitan Hilarion gave a press conference at the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, at which he spoke, inter alia, about inter-Orthodox relations.

The DECR chairman described relations of the Russian Orthodox Church with other Local Orthodox Churches as satisfactory. "Their level is high. The Primates of the Local Orthodox Church often pay visits to the Russian Church; His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia visits the Local Orthodox Churches in accordance with the diptych. There are various common projects, in which the Russian Orthodox Church takes part together with other Local Churches. Also, there is a system of bilateral relations: Local Orthodox Churches have their representations – metochia in Moscow, whereas the Moscow Patriarchate has its metochia in the capitals of those states for which an Orthodox Church takes pastoral care."

Metropolitan Hilarion said that seven Local Orthodox Churches have their metochia in Moscow and noted that others do not have them for different reasons, also because some of them have no representations in other Orthodox Churches.

The Local Orthodox Churches maintain a system of mutual aid, and the Russian Orthodox Church renders assistance to the Local Orthodox Churches if they ask for it. For instance, a set of seven bells for the belfry of the Monastery of St. George the Great Martyr was presented to the Orthodox Church of Alexandria during Patriarch Kirill's visit to the Patriarchate of Alexandria. His Beatitude Patriarch Theodore of Alexandria and All Africa asked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to help with the restoration of the monastery, which houses the residence of the Patriarchs of Alexandria. The Monastery was built on the site on which the Great Martyr St. George the Victorious was incarcerated and where, according to legend, the Holy Family – St. Joseph the Betrothed, the Holy Virgin Mary and the Infant Christ stayed after having fled from King Herod. "This is a holy place for all Christians, and the Russian Orthodox Church will help, as far as possible, to restore the monastery," Metropolitan Hilarion underscored.

Besides, in compliance with the treaty of cooperation between the Metochion of the Moscow Patriarchate in Prague and the Orthodox Church in the Czech Lands and Slovakia, the Russian Orthodox Church helps with arrangement of the Administrative Metropolitan Centre in Prague, Metropolitan Hilarion said and added: "A substantial advance has been made in connection with a sad event in the life of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia. The term of rent of the

building that housed the official resident of its Primate, His Beatitude Metropolitan Christopher, has expired recently. He asked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill to help him, and the Patriarch charged the DECR to find finances to meet the request. They were quickly found. Thanks to this aid that was a gift of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, Metropolitan Christopher purchased a building for his residence."

Metropolitan Hilarion remarked that such examples of cooperation between the Local Churches "testify to the fact that our relations are truly fraternal and are not limited by declarations of friendship. There is a real system of cooperation and mutual aid that we should develop and make stronger."

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