



Metropolitan Hilarion meets with leadership of the Kharkov region

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On 13 November 2010, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, currently in Ukraine with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, met with leadership of the Kharkov region and Kharkov.

Taking part in the meeting held at the premises of the Kharkov Regional State Administration also were Archbishop Onufry of Izyum, a vicar bishop of the Kharkov diocese; Rev. Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations; hierodeacon Ioann (Kopeikin), assistant to DECR chairman; and L. Sevastianov, head of the St. Gregory the Theologian Charity Foundation; and V. Filipp, Consul General of the Russian Federation in Kharkov.

Deputy head of the regional administration V. Babayev, head of the Kharkov regional council S. Chernov, and the newly elected mayor G. Kernes took part in the meeting on behalf of the Kharkov leadership.

V. Babayev greeted the high guest on behalf of the head of the regional administration M. Dobkin currently on holiday and expressed his satisfaction with the visit to Kharkov paid by a permanent member of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. Deputy governor of the Kharkov region hopes that the visit will promote the strengthening of cultural and spiritual ties between Ukraine and Russia.

Head of the regional council S. Chernov said that the inhabitants of Kharkov have recently celebrated a remarkable date in the history of their city and region – the 300th anniversary of the appearance of the Ozeryansk Icon of the Mother of God. S. Chernov told the guests from Moscow that optional study of history of Orthodox culture has been introduced in schools of the Kharkov region since the beginning of school year.

Kharkov Mayor G. Kernes spoke about cooperation between city authorities and the Orthodox diocese. An example of good relations is given by the return of 'church' names, used before revolutionary events in the 20th century, to the Kharkov streets and squares. An avenue was named after the holy martyr Alexander (Petrovsky), archbishop of Kharkov (1851-1940), and a city festival is timed to his commemoration day.

Representatives of the regional and city authorities expressed their hope for a visit of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to Kharkov and asked Metropolitan Hilarion to convey their invitation to the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Metropolitan Hilarion noted in his address that the main goal of his visit being paid with support of the Ukrainian prime minister N. Azarov is a better acquaintance with the life of a fraternal nation. The DECR chairman said that in 2010 the Ukrainian state authorities have made a number of important moves to consolidate society and overcome divisions, which have been brought about during the last twenty years.

Metropolitan Hilarion and the representatives of regional and city authorities exchanged presents.

That same day the "St Matthew Passion" Oratorio composed by Metropolitan Hilarion was performed at the Kharkov National Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre named after N. Lysenko. Among the listeners were representatives of regional leadership, Consul General of Russia in Kharkov V. Filipp, and minister-counsellor of the Russian Embassy in Ukraine A. Vorovyev.

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