



Metropolitan Hilarion arrives in Filotheou Monastery on Mt. Athos

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On 25 October 2010, a group of Russian pilgrims led by the DECR chairman, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, arrived in the Monastery of St. Filotheou on the Holy Mount Athos. Filopheou, a disciple of St. Anthony the Athonite, founded the monastery in the 10th century. Hieromonk Nikodim, abbot of the monastery, and the brethren met the high guests at the gates. Attired in a hegumen's mantle, His Eminence Hilarion went to the cathedral and prayed there. After the prayer, the abbot welcomed the DECR chairman, wished him and his companions God's help in their pilgrimage, and asked to convey to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia the feeling of profound respect and filial love of all the brethren.

The head of the Russian Orthodox Church delegation said in his address:

"Reverend Father hegumen! Beloved in Christ fathers and brothers!

First of all, I bring you blessing from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, who visited Mount Athos several times and has left a part of his heart here.

The Holy Mountain is exceptionally important for Orthodoxy as a whole and for the Russian Orthodox Church in particular. However, there were certain moments in history that demonstrate a special spiritual kinship between your holy monastery and us. The deeds of St. Cosmas the Etolian, who stood at the roots of the revival of the faith and national conscience of the Greek people during their enslavement, have something in common with the deeds of a great Russia saint, Sergius of Radonezh, the founder of the major Russian monastery – the Laura of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius. He inspires Russian people who suffered under foreign yoke, to liberation struggle under the banner of Orthodox faith. At present, our spiritual ties with your holy monastery are strengthening thanks to the translation of St. Cosmas's works into Russian.

On behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church delegation I welcome your righteous brotherhood and wish you success in your monastic life. I ask you, dear fathers and brothers, to pray for the Russian Orthodox Church and for the entire world."

After the repast, the pilgrims venerated the particle of the Life-Giving Cross of the Lord, the right hand of St. John Chrysostom that was given to the monastery by Emperor Andronicus II Paleologos, the particle

of relics of St. Cosmas the Etolian, the relics of other saints, and the 'Sweet Kiss' Icon of the Mother of God that miraculously came in from Constantinople by sea.

The guests were offered traditional monastery's refreshments and had a talk with the abbot.

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