



## Metropolitan Hilarion arrives in Georgia for the millennium of Svetitshoveli cathedral

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Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, arrived in Georgia on 13 October 2010, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, for the millennium of the Svetitshoveli Cathedral in Mtskheta.

Metropolitan Hilarion is accompanied on this trip by Archbishop Feognost of Sergiev Posad, abbot of St. Sergius' Laura of the Trinity, Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman, staff members of his department as well as clergy and laity of the Russian Orthodox Church. Metropolitan Emanuel of France, Patriarchate of Constantinople, came to Georgia together with the metropolitan.

The welcoming party at Tbilisi airport included several hierarchs of the Georgian Orthodox Church, staff members of the Patriarchate of Georgia, and the pastor of the Russian-speaking faithful in Georgia, Archimandrite Roman Lukin.

On the same day, His Holiness and Beatitude Iliya II, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, received in audience the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church as well as Metropolitan John of Pergamon and Emmanuel of France (Patriarchate of Constantinople) who also came for the celebrations.

Patriarch Iliya welcomed the representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and then addressed himself to Metropolitan Hilarion, noting in particular that the metropolitan was always his welcome guest. 'I remember you as a very young man when you came to Georgia to pray together with me', he said.

His Holiness also emphasized that he believed himself to be a disciple of St. Sergius in whose monastery he had been educated.

Metropolitan Hilarion thanked His Holiness for warm words and conveyed to him greetings from Patriarch Kirill. 'His Holiness Patriarch Kirill asked me to convey his wishes of good health and long life to Your Holiness and prosperity to your Georgian Orthodox Church. I have always wanted to come to you', he said. He also said he was delighted at the opportunity to concelebrate with His Holiness Patriarch Iliya at the Svetitshoveli Cathedral again as he did 30 years ago when he acted as a candle-bearer during divine services celebrated by His Holiness.

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