



DECR chairman celebrates Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas's in Vienna

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On September 21, 2010, the Day of the Nativity of the Mother of God, DECR Chairman Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, who came to Vienna for a meeting of the Joint Theological Orthodox-Catholic Commission, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas's Cathedral in Vienna.

After the service, the DECR chairman delivered a sermon, saying in particular,

“I have come here with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to attend a regular meeting of the Orthodox-Catholic dialogue. The dialogue is going on not so easily because the issues under discussion, which divide us, have been a stumbling stone in relations between the Orthodox and the Catholics for several centuries. In this dialogue, each of the representatives of the Holy Orthodox Church has to defend the position of the Church so that our Catholic brothers may know why and in which we do not agree with them.

It is the Day of the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God today, which is said to be ‘the beginning of our salvation’. It is not accidental that the ecclesiastical year begins with the Nativity of the Mother of God because it was she who was pre-elected from the human race to become the receptacle of the Living God. Our salvation happened thanks to her consent to become the Mother of God and to accept God of Word incarnate inside herself.

The Lord wished to save the human race, and for this He did not deem it scorn to assume human flesh. God wanted to live up a human life, to become one of us. But it would not have happened without our consent to this ineffable and inscrutable encounter with God – an encounter which happened in the first place in the person of the Most Holy Mother of God. She was the first to respond to God's call to salvation and following her, thousands and millions of people turned to Christ.

The Church, which the Lord Jesus Christ founded with His own hands and His will, exists today and will exist to the end of time. We believe that the Holy Orthodox Church, to which we belong by God's mercy, is the Church that has preserved the Tradition intact as it goes back to the Lord Himself and His apostles. The Most Holy Mother of God is our Mother and the Mother of the Church, for she reached the heights of sanctity in her life no person ever reached. She excelled even the angels in her sanctity.

On this day, the Church reminds us through the words of the Holy Gospel: *Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it* (Lk. 11:28). We hear these words every feast day dedicated to the Most Holy Mother of God. Thus the Lord reminds us that we should not only read the Gospel but also live it up, as He tells us to do.

We should be Orthodox not only in words but also in deeds. Our Orthodoxy should not be reduced to our statements of the truth of our faith, which we make to the Catholics and Protestants. We should live up to the Lord Jesus Christ's commandments. May the Lord Himself, the Most Holy Mother of God and all the saints who have pleased God since olden times help us in this endeavour”.

On the same day, Metropolitan Hilarion took part in a meeting of Orthodox participants in the Joint Commission for Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue. The meeting was chaired by Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon.

The Commission will begin its plenary session on September 22 and will work till September 26. Each Local Orthodox Church is represented by two delegates. The Moscow Patriarchate is represented by Metropolitan Hilarion and Archpriest Valentine Asmus. Archimandrite Kirill Govorun, vice-chairman of the Education Committee, will act as a consultant interpreter.

DECR Communication Service

Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/56669/>