



## **DECR chairman meets with delegation of Italian parliamentarians**

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On 6 September 2010, Metropolitan Hilarion received a delegation of Italian parliamentarians at the Church of "Joy to All the Afflicted" Icon of the Mother of God on Bolshaya Ordynka Street in Moscow. The delegation was led by a chaplain to the Italian Parliament and president of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization archbishop Salvatore Rino Fisichella who conveyed greetings from the Pope of Rome Benedict XVI to Metropolitan Hilarion.

Metropolitan Hilarion greeted the Italian delegation on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. He paid a special attention to the work of the Russian-Italian Civil Society Dialogue Forum, which objective is to shape the directions for the future, to extend cooperation between our countries in various spheres and to create an infrastructure of civil relations in economics, science, and education. Taking part in the Forum are representatives of the Church, civil authorities, business, art, public organizations, and mass media of Italy and Russia.

The DECR chairman underscored the influence of the Italian style on the Russian church art and architecture, saying, "The Russian Orthodox Church has maintained good relations with different dioceses of the Roman Catholic Church in Italy. We exert efforts to strengthen these relations, remembering that irrespective of our differences in dogmatics and ecclesiology, our Church face common tasks to solve in the modern world, including the major one, namely, common defence of Christian values against militant secularism."

In conclusion of his speech, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk expressed his hope for active cooperation between the Orthodox and the Catholics in Russia and Italy in preserving Christian heritage on the continent. Head of the delegation, vice president of the Chamber Maurizio Lupi thanked Metropolitan Hilarion for receiving them and presented him with a silver bas-relief and photo album depicting the building of the Italian Parliament.

*Note:* The Italian delegation is on a pilgrimage arranged by the Chamber of the Italian Parliament from September 3 through 9. The theme is "Orientale Lumen. To the roots of Christian faith meeting traditions of the Orthodox Church." The programme includes visits to the Orthodox holy sites in Moscow and St. Petersburg. The delegation includes Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Italy to Moscow Vittorio Claudio Surdo, vice president of the Chamber of the Italian Parliament Maurizio Lupi, deputies and senators from different political parties and members of their families.

