# Metropolitan Hilarion visits places linked with the life of St. Gregory the Theologian

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On 28 June 2010, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, currently on a pilgrimage to Cappadocia at the invitation of His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, visited Karvali (now Gervali), a place of the fourth century patrimony of St. Gregory the Theologian.

Metropolitan Hilarion looked round the Church of St. Gregory the Theologian turned into mosque in 1920s.

The Church of the Holy Cross was built here during St. Gregory's lifetime in 382. Later, the church became known as the Church of St. Gregory. The relics of his father, St. Gregory of Nazianzus the Elder, reposed here till 1924. The church was rebuilt in 1866, and the Russian Emperor Nicholas II donated bells, a wooden carved iconostasis and an ambo to the church.

The Liturgy was celebrated for the last time on 6 August 1924, the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord. The next day, all Greeks who lived in Karvali, left their homeland, and the relics of St. Gregory the Elder were removed to Greece.

Metropolitan Hilarion said a troparion to St. Gregory the Theologian at the place where the relics of his father once reposed.

The DECR chairman and his companions proceeded to the Church of the Ascension of the Lords located on a steep hill nearby. The church was built in the second half of the 19$^{th}$ century. The construction of an Orthodox seminary begun in the early 20$^{th}$ century was not completed. The first divine service after the destruction of the church was celebrated by His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew in 2004 on the feast of the Ascension of the Lord.

Members of the Russian Orthodox Church delegation sang the troparion for the Ascension in the Slavonic language.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/57037/