



## **55th birthday of Moscow Patriarchate's Chancellor is celebrated in Mordovia**

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On 12-13 June 2010, the Saransk and Mordovia diocese celebrated the 55<sup>th</sup> birthday of the ruling hierarch – Metropolitan Varsonofiy of Saransk and Mordovia, Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Taking part in the celebration were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Archbishop Prokl of Simbirsk and Melekes; Archbishop Ionafan of Tulchin and Bratslav; Bishop Nikon of Lipetsk and Yelets; Bishop Veniamin of Penza and Novokuznetsk; Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's administrative secretariat; Bishop Lazar of Narva, Bishop Kliment of Ruzaevka, vicar of the Saransk diocese, clergyman of Mordovia and other diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church.

After the Divine Liturgy celebrated at St. Theodore's Cathedral, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk read out greetings to Metropolitan Varsonofiy from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and wished Metropolitan Varsonofiy on behalf of all hierarchs God's help in his difficult work in Mordovia, as Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, in his visits to the diocese, meetings with bishops, solution of all problems, and versatile assistance to hierarchs.

"We see a good shepherd in you who leads his sheep, and the sheep follow him because they know him (cf. Jn 10:2-4)," Metropolitan Hilarion said, while presenting a gift to Metropolitan Varsonofiy.

Archimandrite Varnava (Safonov), abbot of the Monastery of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Sanaksary, greeted Metropolitan Varsonofiy on behalf of the clergymen of Mordovia, while Bishop Kliment of Ruzaevka presented him with a set of pectoral images.

The Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate expressed his gratitude for kind words addressed to him, saying: "We should do a lot of work, as we have just begun our to fulfill our duty" and thanked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill for his confidence.

"I am happy to continue my ministry in my beloved native Mordovia, and to revive Orthodoxy here," he added and thanked all bishops who have arrived in Saransk for concelebration, and clergymen of the Saransk diocese for their pastoral care to the believers.

On 13 June, President of the Republic of Mordovia N. Merkushin, prime minister of Mordovia V. Volkov,

chairman of the State Assembly of Mordovia V. Konakov, Mayor of Saransk V. Sushkov and other representatives of the regional and local authorities, as well as workers of culture from different Russian cities came to St. Theodore's Cathedral to greet Metropolitan Varsonofiy.

That same day, the guests visited the Monastery of St. John the Theologian, the Pilgrims' Centre under construction and St. Macarius' scete, website "Patriarchia.ru" reports.

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