Metropolitan Hilarion is awarded golden medal of the University of Bologna

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A ceremony of conferring *Sigillum Magnum*, the Gold Medal of the University, on Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk took place on 18 May 2010.

The University of Bologna, founded in the 11th century, is one of the oldest in Europe and the oldest continually operating university in the world. Studying here were a great Italian poet Dante Aligheri, many scholars, men of letters, and artists from the European countries. As a rule, the University confers *Sigillum Magnum* on renowned men of science and cultural celebrities, as well as on politicians and religious leaders once in two or three years. His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia, the Pope of Rome John Paul II, Nelson Mandela, and Simone Weil were awarded *Sigillum Magnum.*

The ceremony took place at the Santa Lucia hall in the presence of the senators, professors, faculty and students of the University, Archbishop of Bologna Cardinal Carlo Caffarra, representatives if the Russian Orthodox parish in Bologna, other clergymen, and laymen.

The rector of the University, professor Ivano Dionigi, introduced Metropolitan Hilarion to the audience and gave a detailed account of his theological work and church and public activities.

Metropolitan Hilarion delivered a lecture on "Common Christian Roots of the European Culture" in Italian. He analyzed the connection between culture and the Gospels on the basis of a particular historical experience of Eastern Slavs. He noted that the University of Bologna has been founded after the division between Eastern and Western Christians with the two Christians traditions developing independently. In conclusion of his lecture Metropolitan Hilarion said: though a gap has shaped in the field of culture and history dividing the two Christian traditions, it is culture and history that can facilitate their coming closer together.

Professor Andrea Zanotti of the canon law, Faculty of Law, thanked Metropolitan Hilarion for his lecture.

After awarding Metropolitan Hilarion, Rector Dionigi announced that the Institute of Musicology has prepared an unusual present for him. Russian singers Anna Krainikova and Alexei Yakimov, currently on internship at the University of Bologna, sang four romances on verses of the Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca. The future Metropolitan Hilarion composed them at the age of 17.

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