



## **Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations meets with the Ambassador of Paraguay to Russia**

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On 20 April 2010, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, met with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Paraguay to the Russian Federation Martial Broadbill Guillén. Taking part in the meeting that took place at the DECR premises, were acting DECR secretary for far abroad countries the Revd. Sergiy Zvonarev and a staff member M. Palacio.

During the talk held in a friendly atmosphere Metropolitan Hilarion told Ambassador Guillén about the situation with the Russian-speaking diaspora in Paraguay. "Our compatriots have worked for the good of the country. For instance, Russian émigré general I. Belyaev commanded the Paraguay army in the war with Bolivia in 1932-35 and won a victory." The DECR Chairman noted that the emigrants from Russia, whatever country they arrived, have first built Orthodox churches. "There are two Russian churches in Paraguay, the Church of the Intercession in Asunción consecrated in 1928 and St. Nicholas' Church in Encarnación built in the late 1930s."

Ambassador Guillén said that the emigrants from Russia have made an outstanding contribution to the development of different spheres of life in Paraguay, such as culture, politics, and business. He regretted that the Russian parishes in Asunción and Encarnación have had no priest during many years thus making the presence of the Orthodox Church in Paraguay less visible. He believes that the Russian Orthodox Church has good prospects in Paraguay, as the Russian diaspora is numerous and the Paraguayans take a liking to Russian religious culture. This liking is shown by overcrowded halls at the concerts performed by the Sretensky Monastery's choir during the Days of Russia in Latin America held in October-November 2008," the Ambassador said.

He expressed his interest in sending some Paraguayans to study at the seminaries of the Russian Orthodox Church. The DECR Chairman assured him that the Moscow Patriarchate could accept students from Paraguay.

Metropolitan Hilarion presented the guest with the CD with his "St. Matthew Passion" for choir and symphony orchestra as a token of the meeting.

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