Metropolitan Hilarion is awarded a degree of doctor honoris causa of Russian State Social University

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On 14 April 2010, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations and Rector of the Ss. Cyril and Methodius Church Postgraduate and Doctoral School, visited the Russian State Social University (RSSU). Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the RSSU rector V. Zhukov introduced the high guests to the University's activities.

They visited the Church of "Feodorovskaya" Icon of the Mother of God. The construction of the house church began in 2004; it was consecrated in 2006, and since then divine services have been celebrated in it.

The DECR Chairman visited the electronic social library, auditoriums and museum. Recto Zhukov told him about a memorial of the victory in the Great Patriotic war of 1941-45 due to be opened on 9 May.

The Russian State Social University was established in 1991. At present it has forty-two branches in different Russian cities. 128 thousand students are studying 151 specialties. It is the largest in Russia as far as the number of students is concerned. There are twelve Olympic champions, fourteen grand masters, and seventy-two world champions among the University's graduates.

The University hosts a rehabilitation complex and hold health improving programmes for the disabled. The RSSU won the "University of Healthy Lifestyle" national competition: smoking here is forbidden.

Metropolitan Hilarion was greeted at the assembly hall by Paschal troparion sang by the RSSU academic and mixed choir. The enlarged meeting of the Academic Board chaired by Rector Zhukov resolved to confer on Metropolitan Hilarion a degree of doctor *honoris causa* of the Russian State Social University. Metropolitan Hilarion received a diploma and a mantle. The meeting was broadcast live in the University's branches all over the country.

The DECR Chairman thanked the Rector and members of the Academic Board for the award and addressed the faculty and students with archpastoral word, after which he answered many questions, including those about theological education and a possibility for the RSSU graduates to enter the Church Postgraduate and Doctoral School. Metropolitan Hilarion presented Rector Zhukov with a Kazan Icon of the Mother of God.

The RSSU Rector noted the significance of the "Foundations of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church." He said that the Christian faith is replete with pastoral letters and proposed to have a section of the 10th National Scholarly Pedagogical Social Congress dedicated to studying and summing up of the implementation of the document.

After the meeting, the RSSU Variety and Symphony Orchestra conducted by Prof. K. Kostrikov, an honoured worker of culture and doctor of philosophy, performed pieces of the Russian classic composes, as well as pieces from Metropolitan Hilarion's "St. Matthew Passion" Oratorio and the "All-Night Vigil."

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, the Governor Valentina Matvienko of St. Petersburg, deputy chairman of the Russian State Duma Lyubov Slizka, and other renowned political and public figures are the RSSU doctors *honoris causa*.

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