



Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk has a talk with Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople

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Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, and his party visited on 27 March 2010 the Patriarchate of Constantinople. At the patriarchal Cathedral of St. George, they venerated the honourable relics of Sts Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom.

Then Metropolitan Hilarion was received in audience by His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew, who once again thanked the metropolitan for the concert of spiritual music at the historic church of Agia Irini, describing it as an outstanding event with a Christian message in the cultural life of Istanbul and referring to positive public responses to the recital. Metropolitan Hilarion thanked the Primate of the Church of Constantinople for his blessing upon the organization of his concert and for the hospitality and gracious welcome accorded to the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and musicians from Russia.

During the talk that lasted for an hour, they gave a high assessment to the development of relations between the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow after the official visit by Patriarch Kirill to Constantinople last year. 'It is gratifying that we have managed to open a new page in relationships between our two Churches. We will continue developing this policy and take efforts to ensure that the relations between the two Patriarchs are built, as is the case today, in the spirit of brotherhood and trust', Metropolitan Hilarion said. They were pleased with the fact that there was a positive development in many areas outlined for cooperation by the two Patriarchates. As had been agreed, the pilgrimage from the Russian Orthodox Church to the Patriarchate of Constantinople for celebrating in the holy places of ancient Byzantium was broadening and getting better organized, especially pilgrimages to the region of Antalia where monthly celebrations were held for them. They also discussed the positive development of common Orthodox preparations for a Holy and Great Council of the Eastern Orthodox Church and of Bishops' Assemblies which began working in various parts of the world in keeping with the decisions of the 4th Pan-Orthodox Pre-Council Conference which took place last June in Chambesy. 'I would like to thank the Metropolitan of Volokolamsk for the constructive contribution to the work of the Pan-Orthodox Conference and the Inter-Orthodox Preparations Committee', His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew said.

They also discussed details of the forthcoming visit by His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew to the Russian Orthodox Church planned for late May 2010.

Participating in the talk from the Russian Orthodox Church were Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman, Rev. Igor Yakimchuk, DECR acting secretary for inter-Orthodox relations, Rev. George Kirindas, DECR protocol manager, and Mr. I. Kopeikin, an assistant to the DECR chairman. Archimandrite Elpidophoros (Lambriniadis), general secretary of the Patriarchate of Constantinople's Holy Synod, and the Rev. Vissarion Komzias participated in the talk from the Orthodox Church of Constantinople.

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