Leaders of major political parties of Moldova meet at the reception in honour of Metropolitan Hilarion in Kishinev

On 21 March 2010, Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and All Moldova, gave a reception in honour of Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for external church relations, to conclude his visit to Moldova.

Attending the reception were hierarchs and clergymen who concelebrated at the divine service on Sunday, as well as the Moldovan Prime Minister Vlad Filat, leader of the Communist Party of Moldova Vladimir Voronin, leader of the Democratic Party of Moldova Marian Lupu, and Russian Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova Valery Kuzmin.

Leaders of different political forces of Moldova share the opinion that the Orthodox Church is a major social institution in the country.

Metropolitan Hilarion said in his address: 'I see representatives of different political trends at the table, and we are happy to know that the Church, as always, is capable to unite people of different views and different political orientation. The Church should not take sides in political struggle and it opens its doors to people of any political opinion, except extremists and chauvinists."

Metropolitan Hilarion noted with satisfaction that during his short visit to Moldova he heard many positive ideas regarding the development of Church-State relations in the republic. The State is aware of a special historical role of the Church in the shaping of the Moldovan nation as well as of the moral importance of the Church at present.

The DECR chairman said that an intention of the Moldovan leadership to resolve the problem of the teaching of religion in school in the near future was a good sign and continued: "It is high time to overcome the stereotype of thought according to which children should not be introduced to the foundations of religion of their nation. An opinion that they will grow up and sort it out for themselves is a

wrong opinion, as it might be too late. Nothing educates in good things as Orthodoxy does."

Metropolitan Hilarion highly appreciated an idea of building a new cathedral church in Kishinev: "The Cathedral of the Nativity, with all its splendour, does not meet the present requirements of the Orthodox Christians because of its size. A new church should become a symbol of piety of the Orthodox Moldavians."

The DECR chairman touched upon a theme of the unity of the Moldovan people: "This is the time to consolidate the country and its people. The process has begun under the former president Voronin and should go on under the new leadership."

In conclusion Metropolitan Hilarion underscored that "the building of a modern state should not include the denial of traditional roots, as it is the traditional values that shape national identity. Therefore, the future of Moldova should be built on the foundation of traditions by which the Moldavians have lived for centuries."

Also speaking at the reception were Metropolitan Vladimir of Kishinev and All Moldova, Prime Minister Filat, Communist leader Voronin, leader of the Democratic party Lupu, Russian Ambassador Kuzmin, and other high guests.

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