



## **Metropolitan Hilarion's talk to law students and professors in Odessa**

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Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, during his visit to Odessa on March 19, 2010, met with students of the Odessa National Academy of Law.

He was welcomed to the academy by its rector Yu. Polyansky and members of the faculty.

After visiting the students' chapel dedicated to the Protomartyr Tatiana, the DECR chairman and Metropolitan Agafangel of Odessa proceeded to the academy's assembly hall. Over 250 students and professors assembled to listen to him.

Metropolitan Hilarion gave a lecture on Christianity and Modern Society. He explained the radical difference between the New Testament teaching on relations between God and man and pre-Christian beliefs, as through Christ's coming the teaching on sin and punishment was replaced by a completely new paradigm of forgiveness. 'Central to the Saviour's teaching is the idea of repentance and love. The human being is a weak creature. There is no person without sins, but because of His paternal love God is ready to forgive those who repent of their infirmities', he said.

However, he remarked, 'the seeming easiness of Christian teaching on sin and repentance actually places on one an even greater responsibility and demands greater efforts than, for instance, the Old Testaments did'. The metropolitan stressed that according to the teaching of Christ, God forgives a person's sins only if the person himself forgives those who sin against him. Thus, 'this new system of God-man relations generates a new system of interpersonal relations in society. One is called to love another and be lenient to another's infirmities'.

The full text of the lecture will be placed on the DECR website shortly.

In the second part of the meeting, students had an opportunity to ask questions. Asked why some people live long while others die young, Metropolitan Hilarion stressed that 'what is important is not the number of days one lives but the quality of one's life'. He urged young people 'to think seriously over very simple things, such as how and what for you live'.

In the conclusion of the meeting, Rector Polyansky presented the DECR chairman with the Academy's

Medal. Metropolitan Hilarion, in his turn, gave the Academy a copy of the Ukrainian version of his book *The Mystery of Faith*.

*DECR Communication Service*

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