



## Metropolitan Hilarion begins his visit to France

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On 28 February 2010, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for external church relations, began his visit to Paris timed to the Year of Russia in France. He is accompanied by the DECR deputy chairman hegumen Philipp (Ryabykh).

The visit commenced with the Divine Liturgy celebrated at the Three Hierarchs metochion, the main church of the Korsun diocese in France, by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk and Archbishop Innokenty of Korsun together with the first deputy chairman of the Education Committee archimandrite Kirill (Govorun), deputy chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for external church relations hegumen Philipp (Ryabykh), rector of the cathedral hegumen Nestor (Sirotenko), rector of the Paris Orthodox seminary hieromonk Alexander (Sinyakov), and clergymen of the Korsun diocese.

Archbishop Innokenty greeted Metropolitan Hilarion and noted the importance of common work of the Korsun diocese and the Department for external church relations for the strengthening of Orthodox unity in France and arrangement of spiritual and cultural life of the compatriots.

The DECR chairman congratulated the worshippers on the commemoration day of St. Gregory, Archbishop of Thessalonica, celebrated on the second Sunday in Lent. "We might not see the Divine light as the great ascetics of the old times saw it, but through our communion with Christ we feel the Divine grace and special presence of God that is nothing else but God Himself, Who manifests Himself in His actions and in His divine energy. It is this involvement with the living God and communion with God through His Holy Mysteries that give us strength to live, to overcome sorrows, to solve problems, and go along the way leading us to the Heavenly Kingdom."

Metropolitan Hilarion thanked Archbishop Innokenty for warm reception and expressed his support to the work done in the diocese: "Dear Vladyka, you have said that the problems of the parish and the diocese increased. At the same time, wider prospects are being opened, in particular with a possibility to build an Orthodox church in Paris. This is a great undertaking for you and your assistants to implement, but it is an inspiring one, as thousands of people would be able to come to the Lord through this church where Divine Liturgy would be celebrated bringing spiritual good to people." Metropolitan Hilarion assured his fellow bishop in the willingness of the Department for external church relations to continue its cooperation with the Korsun diocese and to render utmost support to it.

That same day Metropolitan Hilarion met with the Russian Ambassador to France A. Orlov. They were

joined in the meeting by Archbishop Innokenty of Korsun, hegumen Philipp (Ryabykh), hegumen Nestor (Sirotenko), hieromonk Alexander (Sinyakov), and A. Trubetskoy.

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