Archbishop Hilarion admits a deacon into monastic vows at the Laura of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius

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On 8 January 2010, the commemoration day of the apostle, Protomartyr and archdeacon Stephen, Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for external church relations, officiated at the All-Night Vigil at the Cathedral of the Dormition of the Laura of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius.

Archbishop Feognost of Sergiev Posad, abbot of the monastery, and the ordained brethren concelebrated.

After the divine service, Archbishop Hilarion too into monastic vows deacon Antony Igumnov, a staff member of the DECR with the name of Stephen given to him in honour of the holy apostle, protomartyr and archdeacon Stephen.

In his archpastoral exhortation Archbishop Hilarion advised hierodeacon Stephen to follow example of his heavenly patron as the monastic way is similar to the way of a martyr and consists of renouncing his own will.

"The Lord granted us our will so that we can direct it at good deeds, but a monk renounces his will to entrust himself to the will of God, which in his life is displayed through the will of church authorities," the DECR chairman said.

He added that a monk's life should differ from the life of common people living in the secular world full entertainment and expressed his confidence in that prayers to God, reading of the Holy Scripture and the works of the Holy Fathers are fundamentals of monastic life.

Archbishop Hilarion admonished the newly tonsured monk to fulfill all obediences placed on him by the Church and church authorities with zeal, humility and thankfulness.

He wished hierodeacon Stephen, "May the Lord, through the prayers of your heavenly patron, help you grow, and may the intercession of our venerable and God-bearing father Sergius be with you in your monastic life. May the Most Holy Mother of God, who is the mother of all monks, cover you with her precious veil, and the Lord lead you to His Kingdom."

By tradition of the Laura, Archbishop Hilarion led hierodeacon Stephen to the relics of St. Sergius of Radonezh, the hegumen of all Russian land.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/57920/