



## **Archbishop Hilarion meets with representatives of the traditional religions of China**

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On 18 November 2009, Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk met with representatives of the traditional religions of China at the headquarters of the Islamic Association of China. The head of the delegation of the Presidential Council for Cooperation with Religious Organizations and the Moscow Patriarchate Department for external church relations was greeted by a member of the People's Political Consultative Council of China and deputy head of the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association Anthony Liu Bainian, deputy head of the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association and the Chinese Bishops' Conference Bishop Ma Inlin of Kunmin, deputy general secretaries of the Islamic Association of China C. Guanlin and Balati, head of the foreign relations department of the Islamic Association of China Chen Juilun, deputy secretary general of the Buddhist Association of China Chen Wanjao, and staff member of the international department of the same association Wan Li.

Taking part in the meeting were members of the Russian delegation, including A. Kudryavtsev, the Presidential Council executive secretary; Archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR MP deputy chairman; A. Povalyaev, first secretary of the Russian Embassy in the People's Republic of China; and D. Petrovsky and I. Kopeikin, DECR staff members.

Anthony Liu Bainian told the DECR Chairman about the life of the followers of the traditional religions of China, such as Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism.

Archbishop Hilarion appreciated an opportunity to meet with representatives of the traditional religious association of China and told those present about the present situation of the Russian Orthodox Church, her external activities and dialogue with representatives of the world religions, and the tasks of the delegation's visit. The development of cooperation of religious contacts between Russia and China is stipulated by the provisions of the intergovernmental agreements, he added.

Archbishop Hilarion shared his views on the situation of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church and dialogue with the Chinese State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) on the on possible aid to revive her liturgical life.

On behalf of representatives of the traditional religious organization, Anthony Liu Bainian expressed his appreciation of the ongoing dialogue on the normalization of the situation of Orthodoxy in China and added that, as a Catholic, he is well aware of the importance of having the well-trained clergymen and

church buildings so that the Orthodox Christians could lead a normal church life.

That same day Archbishop Hilarion left for Harbin. The Russian Ambassador to China S. Razov bid farewell to the delegation at the airport. Archbishop Hilarion and members of the Russian delegation exchanged opinions on the preliminary results of the talks with the director of a SARA department, Ms. Liu Tsinguan.

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