



DECR Chairman gives interview to the Orel and Livny Press Service during his stay in Mtsensk on the occasion of the return of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God

On 8 November 2009, the Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk gave an interview to the Orel and Livny diocese press service during his stay in Mtsensk on the occasion of the return of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God.

-Your Eminence! A momentous event for our region took place today – the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God is returned to us. Such events have good press coverage and rivet people's attention on the life of the Church, bringing it in the centre of social life. Is the Russian Orthodox Church ready to accept this challenge and occupy the position of which she grew out during seventy years of the Soviet persecution? The problem is that some people lay the blame for the collapse of the Russian Empire on the Church, saying that she, with her great influence, did nothing to prevent the tragedy.

- The Soviet period ended almost twenty years ago, and we should get used to the fact that the Russian Orthodox Church occupies her worthy place in the life of people and the country. The Church plays a great social role, being a strong moral authority. The Church brings different people of Russia in the post-Soviet space closer together.

The Church unites not only Orthodox believers, but all people. On November 4, the Day of National Unity, we saw His Holiness the Patriarch going from the Cathedral of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God together with the leaders of other religious communities, such as Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism. The representatives of other religions are willing to go be with the Church to make the life better and to consolidate our society.

- The Russian Orthodox Church takes part in a state project of gathering "the Russian World" together, being its uniting force. What do you think about the role of the Russian Orthodox province in this process?

- The notion of "the Russian world" includes all people who cherish Russian history and Russia, speak Russian and love their Motherland, people whose roots are to be found in Russia even if they live abroad. "The Russian world" is a civilization that has given rise to its own culture that has its own language and its national and historical characteristic features.

All Russian people, irrespective of the place of their residence, can take part in the consolidation of "the Russian world." Those who cherish Russian spiritual heritage can contribute to the building up of "the Russian world," which can enrich the people of Europe.

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