



Archbishop Hilarion: "People who heed the voice of the Church can hold out any trial"

On 7 November 2009, the Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk took part in "The Church and the World" programme broadcast on "Vesti" TV channel and answered questions on the connection between history of the Church and the state in Russia.

Archbishop Hilarion emphasized that the Russian Orthodox Church has always exerted a great influence on the private and public life. "As a matter of fact, the entire life in the Pre-Petrine Russia was permeated with the church ideal. Even those people who did not belong to the Orthodox Church but lived in Russia were involved in the orbit of this spiritual influence.

"The influence of the Church did not disappear even when Peter I gave a new format to the state policy toward the Church, deprived her of the Patriarchal status and made it a state department."

He said further that in the Soviet time the Church was not only underestimated, but ignored. However, many times in history the Church played a consolidating role for the nation. "The Day of National Unity celebrated on November 4 is a glorious event in Russian history. The country was liberated from foreign invaders not only because of the state policy or skilful actions of military commanders, but because people closed the ranks with the Church and defended their country under her guidance. This testifies to the great spiritual potential of our country. When people head for the Church and heed her voice, they can hold out any trial."

Answering the question whether the monarchy is a preferential form of state governance, the DECR Chairman said that as there were good and bad monarchs, the "Foundations of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church" teach that one should not consider this form of governance the only one or say that the Church considers it preferential.