Metropolitan Hilarion: Soviet dogma on religion's 'dying out" is obviously untenable

The recent US poll has shown the growth of religious belief among very young people – the so-called 'Generation Z." At our time of coronavirus pandemic and other calamities, which are shaking society, those born in 2001-2010 are relying on God much more than the elderly people. The young are getting ahead of even those who have been born before the Second World War was over.

As to the sentiments of the youth, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, said that a sustainable growth of religious belief can be seen in many countries of the world, the United States including, as well as in some countries of Western Europe and other regions.

"I recall that during the Soviet times people were indoctrinated that religion was a dying phenomenon, that only the elderly people or people who have not found their vocation were seeking solace in religion. In the 1960s, the Khrushchev time, a bid was made on the complete dying of religion in twenty years, during which communism will be built and religion will disappear. However, we see that this has not happened. Religious revival has begun in our Fatherland thirty years ago. More and more people, including the young ones, come to church," Metropolitan Hilarion said.

He also noted that the Church exerts special efforts in making the young people feel at home in churches. "There are youth movements and youth clubs at our parishes. Also, we work with the youth through the mass and social media, and we see good fruits of this work."

At the same time, one cannot but see that there are many young people who are not church-goers and strictly observant, or do not belong to any traditional confession, or even have negative attitude to religion.

"I believe that we, people of the church, must work with this segment of our society. We are ready to hold direct conversation and answer questions."

Metropolitan Hilarion believes that dialogue and understanding of religion and its necessity are vitally important also for the consolidation of society.

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