

## **Metropolitan Hilarion: the Church does not bless the same-sex cohabitation, for it is a sinful way of life**



A recent response from the Catholic Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to the question on whether the Catholic Church gives blessing to same-sex unions clearly stated: “there are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family” At the same time, some commentators did not understand the mentioning of the fact that a blessing can be given separately to people, who are in a same-sex union.

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations, noted in the ‘Church and the World’ TV program that this document testifies to the fact that the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is identical to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, regarding same-sex unions. “In no way and under no circumstances can we accept same-sex unions as a marriage union with all the ensuing consequences of this rejection,” the Metropolitan stressed. “Accordingly, there can be no wedding or any blessing for a same-sex couple.”

Commenting on the possibility of people of non-traditional orientation to receive an individual blessing, the Metropolitan expressed the following opinion: “As far as I could understand the meaning of this document, it means that people who are in same-sex unions cannot receive the blessing of the Church in any form. This does not exclude a possibility for each of them individually to receive a blessing from the Church – not a blessing for the sinful cohabitation, but simply a blessing. People with a homosexual orientation also come to our Orthodox churches. Each such person can go to the priest and receive a

blessing from him, and the priest cannot deny them this. But if such a person says, "Father, bless me for a same-sex union, then the priest, of course, will refuse."

"As I understand it, on this issue there is complete agreement between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church: same-sex cohabitation is unacceptable, it is a sin from the point of view of the Church. Accordingly, if two men or two women come to a priest, be it Orthodox or Catholic, and ask for some form of blessing for cohabitation, then this blessing will not be given," Vladyka noted.

At the same time, Metropolitan Hilarion continued, if each of these people individually approaches the priest in order to receive a blessing, then the priest will not reject such a person, just as he does not reject people who commit other sins. "These people come, each one individually, to the Church, to the priest for confession, for a blessing. We do not bless their sinful way of life, but we bless the person," stated Metropolitan Hilarion. "We tell them: if you want to be saved, then you must give up the sinful way of life."

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