# Metropolitan Hilarion: For me, creativity is a ‘side product’ of Church ministry

On 12th June 2021 in the St. George’s Hall of the Great Kremlin Palace the president of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin awarded the metropolitan of Volokolamsk Hilarion the Russian State Prize for Literature and Art.

Metropolitan Hilarion was awarded the prize for his “contribution to the development of Russian culture and education.” In answer to questions put to him by the host of the Church and the World TV programme Yekaterina Gracheva, the bishop spoke of what he considers to be his main source of inspiration in the creative sphere.

“If we are to talk of books, then the most important thing I have written is probably the six-volume study entitled Jesus Christ: His Life and Teaching, that I spent five years on,” said the metropolitan of Volokolamsk Hilarion. “Quite a few times I re-read the Gospel in the Greek original, and also all of the other gospel narratives that run in parallel to each other and compared one with the other. In addition, in order to write this work, I had to read more than a thousand books and articles. These were mainly books written in foreign languages such as English, Italian, Greek, German and other scholarly books

on Scripture.”

Touching upon his musical creativity, the metropolitan noted that the most well-known of his musical works is the St. Matthew Passion Oratorio which he composed in 2006. Since then, the oratorio has been performed more than a hundred and fifty times in many Russian cities and abroad. “And quite often I find out about these performances from the news. Which is to say, this work, which was once composed on the basis of Orthodox liturgical worship (not for the purposes of public worship but for concert performance), now has a life of its own,” the bishop remarked.

Metropolitan Hilarion emphasized that his varied creative work is a type of side product of his main ministry which he has been carrying out for more than forty years. “I was fifteen years old when I took the decision to follow the path of service to God. I have trod this path for more than forty years, I serve the Church and never once have I been disenchanted by the Church. And it is the Church which throughout these years has been my main source of inspiration,” said the bishop.

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