Metropolitan Hilarion: The Church is the source of my inspiration



On June 13th, 2021, on the 7th week after Holy Pascha, the feast of the Holy Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Moscow church of "Joy to All the Afflicted" icon of the Mother of God on Bolshaya Ordynka street.

Clergymen of the church assisted the archpastor.

During the Litany of Fervent Supplication, petitions were offered up for deliverance of the coronavirus infection.

After the Litany, Metropolitan Hilarion lifted up a prayer recited at the time of the spread of baneful

pestilence.

At the end of the service, the cleric of the Ordynka parish, priest Dimitry Ageev, said the following to the Metropolitan Hilarion:

“Your Eminence, dear Vladyka Hilarion!

On behalf of all the clergy, priests and parishioners gathered here, as well as from many who are not in this church today, but who love you no less than we do, let me congratulate you on the upcoming anniversary of your monastic tonsure and on the upcoming day of your heavenly namesake, which you will celebrate on Saturday (on this day you will serve at another church - at the Chernigov Metochion, so few of us will be able to share this prayer joy with you). We congratulate you in advance and ask for your holy prayers. This day is also a holiday for all of us.

I would like to congratulate you on the lofty State Awards that were given to you recently: the Order of St. Alexander Nevsky and the State Prize of the Russian Federation, which President Vladimir Putin presented to you yesterday. These two awards, very high and worthy, were presented to you for different aspects of your work. The Order of St. Alexander Nevsky was given to you by the state for your many years of fruitful work as the Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations. You are making great efforts to establish fraternal relations between many peoples of our world, to strengthen fraternal ties between Orthodox Churches, for inter-Christian dialogue, you also care for our compatriots living abroad. For all this, the state celebrated your labors by presenting you the Order of St. Alexander Nevsky.

And the State Prize of the Russian Federation, which was given to you yesterday (many of us watched this presentation live and were very happy), was presented for your creative works: your wonderful music, which we love, your books that we read, numerous films and tv programs.

In a way, both of these awards are awards for the entire Church - this is the recognition by the state of the role that the Russian Orthodox Church has been playing in society and the contribution that it makes to the culture of our country. But we are very glad that you, dear Vladyka, have become the spokesman for this recognition. All this is due to another talent that is not mentioned in the decrees, but thanks to which it all became possible - the fact that you know how to find the way to the heart of every person, the path to the heart of people of all ages, with very different social statuses, various formations, talents , spiritual gifts, different worldviews, different political positions. This is a very great talent. We are very glad, Vladyka, that this was appreciated at its true worth with such high awards.

For our part, Vladyka, we pray to God that the Lord will strengthen you for many and good years in this

difficult ministry as the Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, strengthen and multiply your many talents for the joy of all of us, for the consolation of the people of God, and we promise to pray for your health for many good years ”.

Afterwards Metropolitan Hilarion addressed the congregation:

“Dear Father Dimitri, dear fathers, brothers and sisters!

I sincerely congratulate all of you on this day. Thank you for your congratulations on the state prizes that I have been awarded recently. I don’t know how fruitful my service as the Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations is, but in any case, it has been going for many years. At least in terms of time in this position, I have already surpassed my three predecessors - Metropolitans Philaret, Juvenaly and the ever-memorable Metropolitan Nikodim. But, of course, each of these Chairmen of the Department carried out his ministry in his own time and in his era. There were difficulties back then. Now the difficulties are of a different order. However, The Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations is a person who, together with his team, with his co-workers and assistants, stands guard over the sacred borders of our Church, as I often say lately. I would like to wish all of us that these sacred boundaries will not be shaken, that our Holy Church will be preserved in that unity, in that size and those geographical borders that were not created by us, not our generation, but which were created by many centuries of the labors of our predecessors.

Of course, I was very pleased yesterday and it was touching for me to receive the State Prize from the hands of the President of the Russian Federation, to hear kind words addressed to me. But I think that none of this would have happened, there would have been no creative accomplishments were it not for the Holy Church, which has been guiding and inspiring me from my youth in everything I do.

Yesterday I said very sincerely that the Church is a source of inspiration for me, daily inspiration, because in order to perform any ministry with inspiration, one needs the assistance of the Holy Spirit. These ministries can be very different. They may seem more creative or less creative. Of course, sometimes it seems that there could be nothing more creative than writing a symphony or a book. When we think of composers or writers, it seems to us that they were some special people who were inspired by some special feelings or ideals. It would also seem that there is nothing less creative, however, than sitting at a desk and sorting out documents of an official nature, putting signatures under congratulations or under responses to congratulations. It may seem to some that this is generally a waste of time.

But in fact, a person will only be able to fulfill all his obediences with dignity if he performes them all with

inspiration, if he does not divide what he is entrusted with or what he wants to do into what he likes or dislikes. If he treats every work as the obedience he received from God, then the Lord will inspire him, the Holy Spirit will inspire him and then everything he does will be successful.

We are now experiencing the liturgical period of the Church year between the feast of the Ascension of the Lord and the day of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles - the day of Holy Pentecost. This is the period when we remember the initial steps of the Church of Christ on earth. We heard today a story about the Apostle Paul, about how he was preparing to come to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. Of course, not on that first feast of Pentecost, when tongues of fire descended on the apostles, but on one of the subsequent feasts of Pentecost. He wanted to come to Jerusalem, among other things, in order to provide charitable assistance to the Jerusalem Church, which was already suffering from persecutions, and he collected funds from all churches in order to help the suffering Jerusalem brothers.

Today we recall another event from the history of our Church - the I Ecumenical Council, the very Council of Nicaea in 325, which established the Creed – the Symbol of Faith, as well as the common date for all Christians to celebrate Pascha, and which, most importantly, made a decisive contribution to overcoming the Arian heresy. Therefore, that Council established throughout the Church once and for all the veneration of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Incarnate God, as the Word made flesh, as the One who possessed all the fullness of the Divine nature and all the fullness of human nature at the same time. Neither nature was diminished from the fact that they were united with one another. Neither the human nature had suffered damage and become less human, nor had the Divine been defiled by contact with human flesh. On the contrary, in an ineffable and mysterious way, these two natures united in one person, the God-man Lord Jesus Christ.

Of course, this theological victory was very important for the Church, because from that moment on, the confession of faith in Jesus Christ as God-man and Savior, as God and man in one person, was established throughout the entire universe. Although after the First Ecumenical Council, as we know from history, the Arian heresy continued to exist. Although other Ecumenical Councils were needed in order to refute this heresy again or to refute new heresies that arose, it was at the Council of Nicaea that this dogmatic confession, this cornerstone of our faith was confirmed precisely.

Remembering today the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, we bow before their theological deed, we admire their intelligence and ask the Lord to keep our Holy Church in the unity that the Lord commanded us and in the faith that was preached by the holy fathers.

We have heard in today's Gospel reading the words of the Lord Jesus Christ - His prayer for His disciples and for all those who believe according to their word, that is, for all of us. The Lord Jesus

Christ, voluntarily going to His death, prayed for His Church and for each of us, for all those who would later join the Church and become its members until the end of the age.

Even today this prayer reminds us of the love of the Lord Jesus Christ for us, of His living presence among us, of His commandment to keep our unity and of the fact that we are His disciples and apostles.

Let us ask the Lord that we should always be worthy to carry out the ministry that is entrusted to us by God and His Holy Church. Let us ask God for the Holy Spirit to descend on each of us on the day of the Pentecost, so that He would renew in us the inspiration to be genuine Christians, guide us in all truth and fill us with His grace.

May the Lord help us all along our path in life. Amen.

I congratulate all of you on this feast. "

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