



## **Metropolitan Hilarion concelebrates with His Beatitude Tikhon, Metropolitan of America and Canada, at St. Nicholas Cathedral in New York**



On July 10, 2021, with a blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, the chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, arrived to the United States of America for a working visit.

At the airport of New-York, His Eminence Hilarion was met by general consul of the Russian Federation in New York S. K. Ovsyannikov and clergy of the St. Nicholas Patriarchal Cathedral - Hegumen Nikodim (Balyasnikov), Archpriest Jaroslav Lutoshkin and Rev. Mark Rashkov.

On July 11, His Beatitude Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the St. Nicholas Cathedral. Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk concelebrated. Participating in the service were also Rev. Alessandro Margheritino, secretary of the Orthodox Church in America, and the clergy of the cathedral.

Addressing Metropolitan Tikhon after the service, His Eminence Hilarion said:

“Your Beatitude Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington, though much Metropolitan of All America and Canada!

Allow me to extend cordial greetings to you on behalf of His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, at the St. Nicholas Patriarchal Cathedral in New York. On many occasions, you have been a guest of this cathedral - the center of the spiritual and liturgical presence of the Russian Orthodox Church in the American land, but lately the pandemic has prevented you from visiting this church. And today when the pandemic, though weakened, is still there in the American continent, we have an opportunity to give you a cordial welcome here.

This trial has fallen to the lot of all the nations in the world. We remember how on the last Pascha many churches in both Russia and here in America were closed for parishioners, though worship services were celebrated and the Bloodless Sacrifice continued to be offered, most people could see it only on the screens of their computers and could not be present at the service in the church.

The heavy wave of the pandemic, which covered America last autumn and winter, took the toll of tens and hundreds of thousands of lives. Russia and other countries of the canonical presence of the Russian Orthodox Church have had to drain the cup of suffering to the dregs as we have suffered great losses too. In Russia, over 140 thousand people died from the coronavirus, and how many died from its consequences is something that we do not know and we will never be able to estimate.

Unfortunately, while in America, as we see, the pandemic is declining, in Russia a new wave has come because, despite the fact that Russia was the first country to devise a vaccine, the vaccination has not proceeded with a due speed, and today we have a new upsurge of infections and again a great number of deaths. We are praying to God that this trial may come to end as soon as possible for both you and us.

All these sad events have prevented us from marking together last year the significant date for the Orthodox Church in America - the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her autocephaly.

The Orthodox Church is a fruit of the salvific sowing made by Russian missionaries, Russian bishops and priests who brought Orthodoxy to the American continent through Alaska, through the Western coast to reach this place, the Eastern coast of the USA as well. A great deal of righteous effort was exerted to make the Orthodox faith shine forth in the American continent. And in 1970, the Orthodox Church in America, a daughter of the Russian Orthodox Church, became her beloved Sister. She was

granted autocephaly according to the inalienable right of each Local Orthodox Church to define the future of those of her part that have grown to attain independence. And in spite of the fact that in recent time new theories and new views have emerged as to this matter, we, looking at the history, can see that the process of granting autocephaly has never been uniform while the fundamental principle was preserved: autocephaly was granted by a Mother Church to a Sister Church.

Thanks to that epoch-making event in the history of the Orthodox Church in America, this Holy Orthodox Church has become a true national Church of her people, in which they can take part in the worship service celebrated in their mother tongue. This Church is dynamically developing and prospering under the Primatial omophorion of Your Beatitude.

On behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Russia, I cordially congratulate you on these church-wide events and on the forthcoming anniversary in the life of Your Beatitude - your 55<sup>th</sup> birthday. We are of the same age: our dates of birth are only a little over a week apart. I am very much pleased with the fact that the people of our generation have an opportunity today to serve for the Church of Christ and to direct our resources to the service of our flock. I would like to wish you that for the following 55 years of your life, the Lord may strengthen you and give Your Beatitude the energy to bear the heavy archpastoral and Primatial cross”.

In his response, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon warmly greeted Metropolitan Hilarion, pointing to the spiritual, canonical and doctrinal unity of the Orthodox Church in America and her Mother Church - the Moscow Patriarchate. “Dear Metropolitan Hilarion, I am glad to have an opportunity to celebrate the Divine Liturgy together with you in spite of the continued pandemic of the coronavirus infection”, His Beatitude stressed.

Metropolitan Hilarion presented Metropolitan Tikhon with a holy pectoral icon gifted to him by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

His Eminence Hilarion also addressed the clergy and parishioners of the St. Nicholas Patriarchal Cathedral:

“Dear Fathers, Dear Brothers and Sisters!

I would like to convey to you a greeting and blessing from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill.

We all have come and still continue coming through a difficult period of trials. But the Lord is merciful: at this time He gives us consolation with His many beneficial gifts. Our principle consolation is the Divine Liturgy celebrated in the church, the Holy Eucharist, in which we have an opportunity to participate and

partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, which enable us to endure hardships of this age and to prepare for the life to come.

I would like to wish us all that we may firmly safeguard the holy Orthodox faith, love our church, be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ in our life journey and fulfil His Divine commandments.

I wish the clergy of the St. Nicholas Patriarchal Cathedral God's help in your pastoral work which is so much demanded and needed now".

At a request of the cathedral's youth club, His Eminence Hilarion conveyed to parishioners a number of his books.

On his trip to the USA, Metropolitan Hilarion is accompanied by Philipp Champion, a DECR staff member, and Sub-Deacon Vyacheslav Li.

*DECR Communication Service*