



## **DECR chairman meets with U.S. Ambassador to Russian Federation**



On September 15, 2021, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations, met with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Russian Federation H. E. John Sullivan.

The high guest was accompanied by second secretaries of the U.S. Embassy Mr. Arshia Benam and Mr. Michael Cline. Participating in the meeting was also Archpriest Sergey Zvonarev, DECR secretary for the affairs of the diaspora, and Archpriest Daniil Andreyuk, representative of the Orthodox Church in America to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

Metropolitan Hilarion welcomed the guest to the synodal department and expressed condolences on 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington.

The DECR chairman told the ambassador about the service of the Russian Orthodox Church in the situation of the pandemic of a new coronavirus infection and about the peculiarities of celebration of divine services in the period of isolation. The archpastor informed the ambassador about the service of the Russian Church in the American land in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and relationships between the Russian and American Orthodox Churches.

His Eminence also shared his story about his latest trip to the USA for the International Religious Freedom Summit in Washington.

They discussed the religious situation in the Middle East, where many Christian residents have to leave their native heath because of the destabilization of socio-political situation and the raging of terrorism and extremism.

At a request of the head of the American diplomatic mission, Metropolitan Hilarion spoke about the difficult pages in the history of the Russian Church in the situation of atheistic ideology and about the church revival which began in our country 30 years ago, the restoration of ruined churches and construction of new ones, about today's church life, pastoral care for compatriots residing abroad and the state of inter-confessional and interreligious dialogue in Russia.

*DECR Communication Service*

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