



## Metropolitan Hilarion begins his visit to Kazakhstan

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On 18 February 2013, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, chairman of the Synodal Biblical and Theological Commission (SBTC) and rector of the Ss Cyril and Methodius Church Postgraduate and Doctoral School arrived in Kazakhstan with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. Accompanying Metropolitan Hilarion are archpriest Vladimir Shmaliy, vice-rector of the Postgraduate School and secretary of the SBTC; and A. Shishkov, research scholar of the SBTC.

The main goal of the visit is field courses of professional development for bishops of the metropolitan area of the Russian Orthodox Church in the Republic of Kazakhstan, of the metropolitan are of Central Asia and of Azerbaijan. The courses are sponsored by the Ss Cyril and Methodius Church Postgraduate and Doctoral School.

Meeting the guests at the Almaty airport was Metropolitan Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan. The hierarchs visited the Cathedral church of the Ascension and the Cathedral of St. Nicholas. They venerated the shrines and prayed at the relics of the holy confessor Nicholas, Metropolitan of Alma-Ata and Kazakhstan.

That same day in the evening, Metropolitan Hilarion, Metropolitan Alexander and Bishop Gennady of Kaskelen, chancellor of the metropolitan are in the Republic of Kazakhstan, attended a concert of religious music at the Kazakh state conservatory named after Kurmangazy. Russian Consul General in Almaty, Viktor Zavyalov, was among the listeners.

That same evening, the head of the metropolitan are in the Republic of Kazakhstan gave dinner in honour of Metropolitan Hilarion.