



Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk celebrates Divine Liturgy in Paraguayan capital

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On July 3, 2011, during his visit to Paraguay on an invitation of the Paraguayan government, Metropolitan Hilarion celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Catholic Cathedral of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay. He was assisted by Metropolitan Platon of Argentina and South America and Hegumen Varfolomey (Oviedo), rector of the Moscow Patriarchate parishes in the Argentinean Province of Misiones.

Among the worshippers were Mr. S. Reschikov, Russia's charge d'affaires in Paraguay, Mr. D. Kravtsov, director of Russia's Federal Agency for Cooperation representation in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, Russian diplomats and expatriates. Present were also Paraguay's Supreme Court President Luis Benitez Riera, Ms Margarita Morselli, head of the National Committee for the 200th Anniversary Celebrations, and public figures including descendents of the War of Independence heroes. Mr. Benitez Riera greeted Metropolitan Hilarion on behalf of the government and presented him with the medal issued for the anniversary of the independence.

After the liturgy, Metropolitan Hilarion addressed himself to the congregation with an archpastoral homily. He said in particular that the communicants were Orthodox people residing in Paraguay but among the worshippers were also Catholics including descendents of those who gave their lives fighting for the independence of the country in the beginning of the 19th century.

Metropolitan Hilarion also reminded the congregation of the role that Russian officers played in the Chaco War of 1932-1935. Thanks to a considerable extent to their courage and experience, Paraguay gained victory in that war.

Addressing the Russian Orthodox community in Paraguay, the archpastor called them to cherish their faith as the greatest treasure and to hand it down to their posterity.

Before the service, the DECR chairman visited the Catholic Archdiocese of Asuncion. On behalf of Pastor Cuquejo, Archbishop of Asuncion and president of the Paraguayan Bishops' Conference, who was outside the country, the Orthodox hierarch was welcomed by Mgr Dionisio Echague, general secretary of the archdiocese. Metropolitan Hilarion thanked the high representative of the Catholic Church in Paraguay for the warm welcome and an opportunity to celebrate at the main Catholic church of the country. The metropolitan conveyed for Archbishop Cuquejo a copy of Patriarch Kirill's book

Freedom and Responsibility: In a Search for Harmony in Spanish.

DECR Communication Service

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