

AN ADDRESS OF GREETING TO H.E. HILARION, METROPOLITAN OF ROCOR.

An Address of Greeting to His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion
Metropolitan of Eastern America and the New York Diocese and
First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia.

The Divine Liturgy

The Convent of Saint Mary Magdalene

Sunday, 4 September

Your Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion,

Your Eminences,

Your Graces,

Archimandrite Tikhon,

Mother Elizabeth,

Beloved monastics,

Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

Christ is in our Midst!

As we continue to keep the Afterfeast of the Dormition of the
Mother of God, we are glad to welcome you, our dear brother
Metropolitan Hilarion, to Jerusalem. In this church on the
Mount of Olives, we are very near to Mary's tomb, and we pray
fervently to her today for you and for your arch pastoral
ministry.

As we remember the gathering of the Apostles for the falling asleep of Theotokos,

We recall the words of the Psalmist, who said

How very good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! (Ps 132: 1)

The Church of Jerusalem, the Mother of all the Churches, is happy to have gathered under her wings all those faithful Christians who, over the years and because of difficult circumstances, have been separated from the bosom of their homeland and of their own Local Orthodox Churches.

Today by our presence at this Eucharist gathering, we celebrate the fullness of the communion of the Mother Church of Jerusalem with all her children, and we celebrate the fullness of the communion of the Mother Church of Jerusalem with all her children, and we celebrate the coming together of the brothers and sisters of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The restoration of canonical communion between the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia is a living sign of the ecumenical and catholic life of the Orthodox Church. In just this ecumenical and catholic life does the Orthodox Church give witness to the power of love and humility that produces the fruit of reconciliation and unity. This is the will of God for the Church.

Our unity in the Orthodox Church is for the sake of our common mission, and our unity is our chief assurance of the respect that each Local Orthodox Churches has for the integrity of other Local Churches. In our common life there is no place for suspicion, mistrust, or antagonism. As we say in this and every Divine Liturgy,

“Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Holy, Consubstantial and undivided Trinity!”

Let us guard our unity and our proper relationships as gifts from God.

We give thanks to Almighty God that through the *diakonia* of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Christianity has taken deep root in this Holy Land over the centuries. The Patriarchate of Jerusalem not only represents the Orthodox world in the Holy Land; the Patriarchate also guarantees the Christian prescience in the Holy Places and ensures that these sites retain their fundamental spiritual significance and are accessible to all pilgrims without distinction. Since the earliest times, the Brotherhood of the Holy Tomb has been faithful in this ministry.

So as we welcome you, Your Eminence, we do so fully conscious of the communion of brotherly love that exists between us, and that is sustained by the witness of the living faith of the Church in this Holy Land. We are certain that this same true brotherly love, by God's Grace, will always characterize the relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

We extend to you, and to Archimandrite Tikhon and Mother Elizabeth and to all the faithful gathered here our Patriarchal blessing, and our best wishes to you as you continue on your pilgrimage in the Holy Land. As a sign of this blessing, we are pleased to present to you this encolpion.

We pray for Your Eminence many years!

Thank you.

His Beatitude Theophilos III

Patriarch of Jerusalem

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