



Metropolitan Kallistos of Diocleia and Hilarion of Volokolamsk celebrate at the Church of ‘Joy of all the Afflicted’ icon of the Mother of God

Concelebrating were hieromonk Ioann (Kopeikin), vice-rector of the Theological Institute of Post-Graduate Studies, graduates of the Institute, clerics of the church, participants in the 2nd International Patristic Conference on ‘St. Simeon the New Theologian and his Spiritual Heritage’ that took place at the MEPhI National Research Nuclear University: archimandrite Ireney (Steenberg), professor of the Ss Cyril and Athanasius of Alexandria Institute for Orthodox Studies, USA; Protopresbyter Nikolaos Loudovikos, Theological Academy in Thessaloniki, Greece; Revd. Porphyrios Georgi, University of Balamand, Lebanon, the Antiochian Orthodox Church.

Attending the service was Prof. Dimitri Conomos of the University of Oxford., Great Britain.

After the Litany of Fervent Supplication Metropolitan Hilarion read the prayer for peace in Ukraine.

In the end of the Liturgy Metropolitan Hilarion addressed the worshippers. He greeted them and warmly welcomed Metropolitan Kallistos. The DECR chairman recalled that he began to study at Oxford some twenty years ago and Bishop Kallistos was supervisor of my thesis on St. Simeon the New Theologian.

‘Now, as Metropolitan, he came to Moscow to take part in the conference on St. Simeon the New Theologian. Metropolitan Kallistos is a renowned theologian, the author of two books published in the West at the time when only a few knew about the Orthodox faith. They have become international bestsellers, and thousands of people have been introduced to Orthodoxy thanks to these books. Yesterday, Metropolitan Kallistos received a Doctor *Honoris Causa* degree at the Ss Cyril and Methodius Theological Institute of Post-Graduate Studies.’

Metropolitan Hilarion wished Metropolitan Kallistos God’s help in his ministry as pastor and teacher, good health and many years.

Metropolitan Kallistos greeted Metropolitan Hilarion, clerics and all the worshippers, saying:

“Among the many titles given to the Blessed Mother of God the title “Joy of All Who Sorrow” is one that I find most moving and full of meaning. Beside my desk where I work, in the city of Oxford, I have her Icon “Joy of All Who Sorrow”. I pray that to all of you, whatever may be your difficulty, your sadness, your sorrow, that the Holy Mother of God will bring you joy. When we suffer, when we are in sadness and despondency, we know that we are never alone, we have with us Our Lord Jesus Christ and we have always with us in our distress the Holy Mother of God.

“Brothers and sisters, we are now in the middle of the fast, preparing for the coming celebration of the Birth of Our Saviour Jesus Christ. We may reflect that there are three kinds of coming, three different ways in which Christ comes to us. The first coming of Christ was two thousand years ago, when He was born in the city of Bethlehem from His mother Mary in the stable. The second coming of Christ is in the future, at the end of the world. Christ will come again, in glory, with His holy angels, to judge the living



and the dead. But between these two comings of Christ there is a third coming, not in the past, nor in the future, but in the present. Each one of us should ask ourselves: will Christ come to me personally this Christmas? Will I prepare my own heart this Christmas to be a manger in which Christ may be born? We are to see the coming of Christ not just as a historic event in the past, not just as something which we are expecting in the future, but we should see it as something now. Will Christ come to me now, in a new way, this year?

“I pray, brothers and sisters, that each one of you this year may open your heart to Christ that He may be born in you in some new and unexpected way. God bless you!”