Patriarch Kirill congratulates the Primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church on his 90th birthday

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church congratulates His Holiness Irinej, Patriarch of Serbia, on his 90th birthday.

His Holiness Irinej

Archbishop of Pec

Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovci

Patriarch of Serbia

Your Holiness, Beloved Brother and Concelebrant at God's altar,

Kindly accept my cordial congratulations on your 90th birthday.

Honoring Your Holiness on this significant day, I repeat the inspiring scriptural words that befit the occasion: *"Gray hair is a crown of glory, if it is attained in the way of righteousness"* (Proverbs 16:31).

Being one of the oldest First Hierarchs, you have gained special authority among the Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches. With your inherent Primatial wisdom and feeling of responsibility you serve to the unity of Orthodoxy and vigilantly guard the two millennia-old canonical order in the Church of Christ which is "*the pillar and foundation of the truth*" (1 Tim. 3:15).

The zealous and sacrificial ministry of Your Holiness on the old and glorious Patriarchal See of Pec, filled with paternal concern for the spiritual revival of the co-religious Serbian people so dear to our heart, *is abundant*, as St. Paul said, *by many thanksgivings unto God* (2 Cor. 9:12). By the Pantocrator's providence, you are destined to be at the helm of the Church of St. Sava at a very difficult time marked with trials new for her, especially in Kosovo and Montenegro. In sorrows and joys you and your God-loving flock are always accompanied by the prayerful support of the hierarchy, clergy, monastics and the entire Russian Orthodox Church.

Your Holiness, on this glorious day of your celebration, from my heart I would like to wish you abundant physical strength for many years, peace and inexhaustible help from above in your further Patriarchal

ministry performed so diligently for the glory of the Consubstantial and Undivided Trinity.

With brotherly love in Jesus Christ,

+ Kirill

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

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