DECR chairman sends Christmas greetings to Primates of Local Orthodox Churches

Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, sent Christmas greetings to His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch, His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem, His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos-Patriarch Ilya II of Georgia, His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia, His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of Romania, His Holiness Patriarch Neofit of Bulgaria, His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos II of Cyprus, His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania, His Beatitude Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland, His Beatitude Metropolitan Rastislav of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, and His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon of All America and Canada.

The message reads as follows:

From the depths of my heart I congratulate you on the holy and saving feast of the Nativity in the Flesh of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

"The mystery of our religion, which is great," (1 Tim 3:16) is revealed to the human race in the events of the Holy Night, which, by virtue of the incarnation of the Word of God, is as "bright as day" (Ps 139:12), and thereby opens up to those being saved the path to the eternal kingdom of God.

The king and God, who came as an infant in the manger of a poor cavern, graciously bestows gifts upon every person who has laboured so that they may greet his birth on earth: the wise men, who came to him from the east, become the new divine seers, while the shepherds, who were the first to respond to the message that he had come into the world, became the first theologians.

The Holy Orthodox Church proclaims: "The heavenly King has appeared on earth from love of humankind, and has lived among people, for he has assumed flesh from the Pure Virgin" (Hymn to the Mother of God, Dogmatikon in the 8th tone).

In my prayers I wish you the grace of peace, unfailing spiritual joy in the newly-born Christ and his almighty aid in your tireless endeavor-filled labours on the Primatial Throne.

With reverential love in the Lord,

+Hilarion

Metropolitan of Volokolamsk

Chairman

Department for External Church Relations

Moscow Patriarchate

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