



## **DECR chairman congratulates Primate of Georgian Orthodox Church on anniversary of his enthronement**

*Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, sent a message of greetings to His Holiness and Beatitude Patriarch-Catholicos Ilia II of All Georgia on the anniversary of his Primatial ministry. The text of the message is given below.*

Your Holiness and Beatitude:

Please accept my heartiest greetings with the anniversary of your accession to the Patriarchal Throne.

For many decades of your Primatial ministry you have been shepherding the blessed Georgian Church, “neither as being lord over God's heritage, but being example to the flock” (1 Pt 5:3) by your sacrificial love for people, piety and humility.

Thanks to your wisdom and decades-long experience, the Gospel spirit of brotherly affection and mutual understanding has been preserved in the relationships between our Churches under any, even rather difficult, historical circumstances.

Your life and all your creative activities have been always devoted to the preservation of unity and faithfulness to the canonical principles both in the Georgian Church and in the whole world Orthodoxy. You enjoy well-deserved authority in all the Local Orthodox Churches, being one of the eldest and most respected Primates. And today, when the world Orthodoxy once again faces terrible ordeals, it sees in you a man whose knees “have not bowed unto Baal” (1 Kings 19:18), and who has strength to speak out in defence of paternal faith, being a living witness to Christ's truth.

With warm gratitude I recall our frequent personal meetings and prayerfully wish to Your Holiness and Beatitude fortitude and strength in your lofty ministry. I also wish God's help and spiritual growth in Christ to the all-honourable Georgian flock.

With respectful love in the Lord,

**Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk**

**Chairman**

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