



## **DECR chairman sends Christmas greetings to the heads of the non-Orthodox Churches**

*Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, has sent Christmas greetings to Patriarch Tawadros II of the Coptic Church, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark; Patriarch Mar Ignatius Aphrem II of the Syriac Church; Pope Francis; Patriarch Bechara Butros Cardinal al-Rai of the Maronite Church; Patriarch Youssef I Absi of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church; Malankara Metropolitan Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, Catholic of the East; Patriarch Abune Mathias of Ethiopia; Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury; Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Gewargis III Sliwa of the Assyrian Church of the East; Patriarch Ignatius Joseph III Yonan of the Syrians; Bishop Dr. Peter Skov-Jakobsen of Copenhagen, Church of Denmark; Archbishop Dr. Tapio Luoma of Turku and Finland, head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland; Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, chair of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany, and heads of other non-Orthodox Churches.*

The greeting 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 the day” (Ps 139:12), and thereby opens up to people the path to the eternal kingdom of God.

According to St. Leo the Great, in adoring the birth of our Saviour, “we are celebrating the commencement of our own life. For the birth of Christ is the source of life for Christian people, and the birthday of the Head is the birthday of the body” (6<sup>th</sup> Homily on the Nativity of Christ, 2). Let us, then, sing “a new song, a song of praise to our God” (Ps 40:3), who truly has become Man for our salvation.

In my prayers I wish you grace-filled peace, unfailing joy and God’s almighty aid in your lofty ministry.

With love in Christ who has been born,

**+ Hilarion**

**Metropolitan of Volokolamsk**

**Chairman**

**Department for External Church Relations**

**Moscow Patriarchate**

---

Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/45803/>