DECR chairman sends Easter 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 Easter 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 Greek Catholic Melkite Church; Malankara Metropolitan Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, Catholic of the East; Patriarch Abune Mathias of Ethiopia; Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos Karekin II of All Armenians; Armenian Patriarch Nourhan Manougian of Jerusalem; Catholicos Aram I of Cilicia; 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; Catholicos Patriarch Krikor Bedros XX of Cilicia, head of the Armenian Catholic Church; 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:

On this radiant day of the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ I address you from the depths of my heart with the words of the ancient Christian greeting:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Having voluntarily suffered upon the cross and risen on the third day, the Son of God who loves humankind redeems people from the power of sin and death, granting to us salvation and life everlasting. "The mystery of the Passover," teaches St. Ambrose of Milan, "imparts to all those who believe in Christ and who have been reborn in the faith a joy that returns every year and the glory of the blessedness of faith (*On the Mystery of the Passover*, 5).

The world which surrounds us, and in which iniquity and division are forever abounding, as never before stands in need of the Gospel news of the risen Saviour. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in

heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light," says the Lord (Mt 11:28-30). Let us proclaim, then, to the whole world Christ's resurrection, calling those that are both far from us and close to us to the grace of the Holy Gospel!

I wish you good health and God's gracious aid in your lofty ministry.

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