THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

DECR chairman sends congratulatory message to Patriarch Neophyte of Bulgaria on the occasion of anniversary of his Patriarchal ministry

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations, congratulated the Primate of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, His Holiness Patriarch Neophyte, on the occasion of the anniversary of his ascension to the Patriarchate throne. Below is the full text of the message.

Your Holiness,

I cordially congratulate you on the sixth anniversary of your enthronements.

You have been elected to the Patriarchal throne by the providence of God Who has put the helm of the very precious boat of the Bulgarian Orthodoxy in the hands of a man *approved in Christ* (Rom. 16:10), adorned with archpastoral wisdoms and virtues, who has gained the love and deep respect of the whole Orthodox Bulgarian people.

In performing your lofty Patriarchal ministry, you, by your own example of devoted life and lofty word, inspire pastors and their flock to live a life in accord with the eternal commandments of the Holy Gospel. You wisely remind the mighty of this age that *he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God* (2 Sam. 23:3).

Great is the contribution Your Holiness has made to the development of relations between the Russian and Bulgarian Orthodox Churches. Their special closeness has been given another evidence by the recent glorification of an ascetic whose veneration unites the peoples under his spiritual nourishment – St Seraphim (Sobolev) of Boguchar. We remember with gratitude that the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church under the chairmanship of Your Holiness has repeatedly spoken in support for the suffering canonical Orthodoxy in Ukraine.

On this auspicious day, I prayerfully wish you peace, beneficial strengthening of your physical resources

and God’s inexhaustible help in your work at the Patriarchal See of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

With respectful love in the Lord,

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk

Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations

Moscow Patriarchate

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