



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Department for External Church Relations

DECR chairman sends Christmas greetings to Primate of the Local Orthodox Churches

Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, sent Christmas greetings to His Beatitude Pope and Patriarch Theodore II of Alexandria, 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 Hieronymos II of Athens and All Greece, 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 radiant feast day of the Nativity of Christ.

Today the prophetic words of the archangel Gabriel, spoken to the Most Pure Virgin Mary, have been fulfilled: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (Lk 1:35). The true God, who was before all ages, "for us men and for our salvation," "according to his good pleasure, by a strange self-emptying, passed through the womb, yet kept it sealed" (4th Ode of the Canon for the Office of the Nativity of Christ). Amazed at the ineffable miracle of the incarnation of the Son of God, our hearts are filled with thanksgiving to God and rejoicing which we hasten to impart to our beloved brethren in the faith.

In my prayers I wish you peace, the fullness of heavenly gifts and unfailing joy in the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, as well as God's all-powerful aid for you and the fullness of your God-loved flock.

With reverential love in Christ who has been born,

+ Hilarion

Metropolitan of Volokolamsk

Chairman

Department of External Church Relations

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