



Patriarch Kirill sends Christmas greetings to heads of non-Orthodox Churches

His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, has sent Christmas greetings to heads of non-Orthodox Churches. The addressees include Patriarch Tawadros II of the Coptic Church, Pope Francis of Rome, Patriarch Mar Ignatius Aphrem II, head of the Syrian Jacobite Church; Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Gewargis II Sliwa, Assyrian Church of the East; Maronite Patriarch Beshara Boutros, Cardinal al-Rahi; Catholicos of the East, Metropolitan of Malankara Basilius Mar Thoma Poulos; Patriarch Abune Mathias I of Ethiopia.

Greeting them on the great feast of the Nativity of Christ, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church writes:

Over two thousand years have passed since a wonderful and most glorious miracle happened in the Bethlehem cave – *God appeared in the flesh* (I Tim. 3:16). Trembling with reverence before the mystery of this event inscrutable for the human mind, we praise Christ Who was born and proclaimed the Divine truth and opened for people a way to salvation and everlasting life.

In our solemn marking of this feast, we should remember about the great predestination of Christians called by the Lord Himself to be *the light of the world and the salt of the earth* (Mt. 5:13-14), to do the works of love and charity, to bear witness before those who are near and who are far to the eternal ideals of the Gospel.

I wish you physical strength, fortitude and God's generous help in our lofty ministry.

With love in the Lord,

+ Kirill

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia