



## **DECR chairman sends greetings to His Beatitude Metropolitan Rastislav of the Czech Lands and Slovakia on his 40th birthday**

*Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, sent a message of greetings to the Primate of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, Metropolitan Rastislav, on his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. The text of the letter is given below.*

Your Beatitude,

Please accept my heartfelt greetings with your 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Thousands of Orthodox Christians see in Your Beatitude a pattern of good works: in doctrine – uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned (cf. Tit 2:7-8).

You were called to carry out the archpastoral ministry in the diocese of Prešov, being known to the people of God as, first of all, a modest, humble and zealous steward in the vineyard of the Holy Church of Christ. For nine years you performed your obedience in all godliness and honesty, serving at an orphanage and devoting your time and all the energy to taking pastoral care of the under-age who needed paternal love and care. The service that inspired many people to offer *many thanksgivings unto God* (2 Cor 9:12), prepared you for accepting later the service of Primate.

The Almighty God by His providence ordained you to be elected to the See of Metropolitans at a difficult time, when the unity of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, that you now head, depended on your archpastoral wisdom.

In your responsible and arduous Primatial ministry you can always rely on the prayers and brotherly support of the Russian Orthodox Church. Developing relations with the Russian Church is an important part of your activities. It brought us joy that Your Beatitude took part in the celebrations marking the centenary of the restoration of the Patriarchate in the Russian Orthodox Church.

On your birthday I wish to Your Beatitude spiritual peace, bountiful gifts from God, good health and unceasing help from above for many and good years of your glorious and blessed Primatial service.

With respectful love in the Lord,

**+Hilarion**

**Metropolitan of Volokolamsk**

**Chairman**

**Department for External Church Relations**

**Moscow Patriarchate**

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