



DECR chairman sends Christmas 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 Christmas greetings to Pope Francis; Patriarch Mar Ignatius Aphrem II of the Syriac Church; 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; 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; Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, chair of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany, and heads of many other non-Orthodox Churches.

The greeting reads as follows:

Please accept my heartfelt congratulations on the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Today the Holy Church celebrates the coming into the world of the Incarnate Son of God who became true Man for the "ransom of many" (Mk 10:45). Without this mysterious Incarnation, salvation would not be possible for any of us, for, as St. Leo the Great says, "if the Creator had not come down and shared in the commonality of his creation and had not through his Nativity called our decayed human nature to a new foundation, then, beginning with Adam and down to our times, death would have reigned and an irredeemable curse would have been left on all people" (Homily 5 on the Nativity of Christ).

Let us give thanks to God for the love he has shown towards people and sing the Nativity hymn alongside the heavenly angels: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Lk 2:4).

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

With love in Christ,

+ Hilarion

Metropolitan of Volokolamsk

Chairman

Department for External Church Relations

Moscow Patriarchate

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