DECR chairman expresses condolences over the death of Archbishop Feofan of Berlin and Germany

On 11 September 2017, Archbishop Feofan of Berlin and Germany passed away to the Lord at the age of 64 after a prolonged disease. Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, sent a message of condolences to Bishop Antony of Zvenigorod, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administration for Institutions Abroad, acting administrator of the diocese of Berlin and Germany, to the clergy and flock of the diocese, and to the relatives and friends of Archbishop Feofan.

Your Grace,

All-honourable fathers, brothers and sisters,

Please accept my deep condolences over the death of His Eminence Archbishop Feofan.

I often talked with Vladyka Feofan, and will always cherish in my memory a good image of the wise archpastor and courageous zealot of the glory of the Holy Orthodoxy. His decades-long service for the good of the Church of Christ was successful and fruitful.

When he was very young, at a time of persecution against the faithful, he embarked on a path of serving the Lord and His Holy Church. Performing his ministry first at theological schools, sowing a good seed of the faith in Christ in the hearts of future pastors, and then in the external church activities, as vice-chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, and later as the ruling hierarch of the diocese of Berlin and Germany, Archbishop Feofan in all his obediences proved to be, in accordance with St. Paul's words, a steward of the mysteries of God (Cf. 1 Cor. 4:1) and "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). He was a man of fervent prayer and deep Christian piety.

The Lord willed that he had an illness, which for many years tortured and exhausted him and which he endured with Christian humility and obedience to God. At the same time he continued his active church ministry even in this bodily infirmity.

Vladyka Feofan was a man of unfailing optimism. Despite the afflictions that he suffered, he always fulfilled St. Paul's commandment – "Rejoice evermore" (1Th. 5:16). He spread that joy over all those around him and his numerous flock, whom he served "in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2) – for their

good and benefit, imitating the Lord and giving “his life for the sheep” (Jn. 10:11). Everybody felt the depth and goodness of Vladyka Feofan’s heart.

He radiated kindness, as is proved by the sincere love of the clergy, flock and spiritual children for their late archpastor. Let us give thanks to God for the heroism of his life, for his decades-long pastoral ministry, for his faithfulness to Christ the Saviour and for his love for people. And let us believe that for his long zealous service in the church field he will be vouchsafed to hear the desired words, “Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Mt. 25:21).

As for those who were Vladyka Feofan’s friends, we will always cherish in our hearts his bright image. We know that “precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (Ps. 116:15), and believe in the words of Christ Who said, “He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn. 5:24). Therefore, even while overwhelmed by grief over the loss of our dear brother, we believe that the Life-Giver has prepared for him a place where there is neither sickness, nor sorrow, nor sighing, but only joy and peace in the Lord.

I am praying to our Lord Jesus Christ that He give rest to the soul of His newly departed servant in the mansions of the righteous. Eternal memory to him!
With love in the Lord,

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