



## **DECR chairman's congratulatory message to Patriarch Neophytos of Bulgaria on the occasion of anniversary of his enthronement**

*Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations, has congratulated the Primate of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, His Holiness Patriarch Neophytos, on the anniversary of his enthronement. Below is the full text of the message.*

Your Holiness,

I cordially congratulate you on your Patriarchal enthronement.

Four years ago, you were elected to the Bulgarian Patriarch Throne and took upon yourself the heavy cross of Primatial service. In this field, you have become the successor of their Holinesses Patriarchs Cyril and Maxim of the eternal memory and the Primates who were before them and who worked for over a thousand years to build the spiritual house of Bulgarian Orthodoxy.

The fraternal relations binding the Russian and Bulgarian Orthodox Churches are rooted deep in centuries and represent for our two Churches and the peoples they nourish spiritually a common priceless heritage that Your Holiness have done much to preserve.

Among the important events of Your Patriarchal office is the canonization of an outstanding hierarch of the last century, a theologian and man of prayer - Archbishop Seraphim of Bogucharovo. This man of God equally belongs to both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Bulgarian Orthodox people, to whose spiritual needs he devoted the most part of his life on earth and now intercedes for the well-being of Your Holiness and the welfare of the whole Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

Sharing in prayers lifted up today for you both in heaven and on earth, I ask the Lord of glory that He may send you His peace *which transcends all understanding* (Phil. 4:7), abundant physical and spiritual fortitude and His inexhaustible help in you Patriarchal ministry.

With respectful love in the Lord,

**Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk**

**Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations**

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