



DECR chairman congratulates His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia on the seventh anniversary of his enthronement

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, congratulated His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia on the anniversary of his election to the Patriarchal throne of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Text of the message is given below:

Your Holiness:

Please accept my cordial greeting with an anniversary of your election to the Patriarchal Throne of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Your Holiness, you have been ordained from above to receive a heavy cross of being Patriarch at the difficult and fateful epoch marked by spiritual revival of the Serbian people and also by new challenges.

You maintain contacts with your numerous flock by visiting dioceses of the Serbian Orthodox Church on the Balkans and far beyond. By your ministry in the ancient monastery of the Peć diocese you encourage 'little flock' (Lk 12:32) of St. Savva enduring 'a severe ordeal of affliction' (2 Cor 8:2) at the centuries-old holy sites of the Old Serbia where you worked in your green years as a teacher and then rector of the Prizren theological seminary.

We highly appreciate your efforts aimed at the strengthening of traditionally brotherly relations between our Churches. Being powered by sincere love to the people of Holy Rus' you have many times castigated the actions of schismatics in Ukraine and called to stop the violent fratricidal conflict.

We are very grateful to you for your visits to the Russian church in Belgrade, your care for the students from the Moscow Patriarchate who study at the theological faculty of the University of Belgrade, and for the prayerful memory of the Russian soldiers who had given their lives for the freedom of Serbia.

On the anniversary day of your enthronement please accept my warmest wishes of peace, spiritual and physical strength and God's help in your high Patriarchal ministry.

With reverential love in the Lord,

+Hilarion

Metropolitan of Volokolamsk

Chairman

Department for External Church Relations

Moscow Patriarchate

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