DECR chairman sends Christmas greeting to the heads of non-Orthodox Churches

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, sent Christmas greeting to Pope Francis, Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury, Bishop Heinrich Bedford-Strom, chairman of the Council of the EKD, and heads of other non-Orthodox Churches.

The text is given below.

Please accept my heartfelt congratulations on the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

On this radiant grace-filled night God the Word, who is in the bosom of the Father, "was made flesh" (Jn 1:14) for our salvation. As St. Gregory of Neocaesarea says, "Today he who sits on the throne of heaven in glory rests in a manger amidst dumb animals out of love for humans... in order to vanquish the burdens of the sinners and the unrighteous, and loosen their bonds" (Homily for the Nativity of Christ, 12).

In our time when "troubles are enlarged" (Ps 24:17) and the earth once more has been filled with "bloody crimes" (Ezek 7:23), it is especially important for humanity to turn to its Saviour, for he alone has the power to grant consolation to suffering souls.

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

+Hilarion

Metropolitan of Volokolamsk

Chairman

Department for External Church Relations

Moscow Patriarchate

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