



DECR chairman greets Archbishop Leo of Karelia and All Finland with 15th anniversary of his enthronement

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, sent a message to Archbishop Leo of Karelia and All Finland, congratulating him on the 15th anniversary of his elevation to the see of archbishops. The text of the letter is given below.

Your Eminence, Dear Vladyka,

Please accept my cordial greetings with the 15th anniversary of your elevation to the See of Archbishops of Karelia and All Finland.

Since your youth, you have been going *from strength to strength* (Ps. 84:7) in the holy faith, entering into the spirit and traditions of the Orthodox people of the land of Suomi. Having embarked on the path of pastoral ministry at a young age, you worked zealously in the vineyard of Christ's Holy Church. By the Divine Providence you were destined to become a hierarch and perform your service in different parts of Finland, thus preparing yourself for *the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus* (Phil. 3:14) and for assuming the responsibility for the whole flock of the Autonomous Orthodox Church of Finland.

Under the omophorion of Your Eminence the Autonomous Orthodox Church of Finland develops her social and missionary activities, bringing to those who are near and those who are far off the light of Christ's love, and bearing witness to His commandments and intransient truths of the Holy Orthodoxy.

As chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, I would like to express my appreciation for your efforts aimed at strengthening ties of friendship with the Russian Orthodox Church and for the paternal care that you take of the Russian-speaking Orthodox Christians living in Finland and of numerous pilgrims visiting the New Valamo Monastery.

On this solemn day of celebration, I prayerfully wish to Your Eminence peace, physical and spiritual strength and God's help in your archpastoral ministry.

With fraternal love in the Lord,

