



DECR chairman greets Patriarch Irenaeus on commemoration day of St. Sava of Serbia

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR) has greeted the Primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church on the commemoration day of St. Sava. The message of greetings reads as follows:

Your Holiness,

I cordially greet you on the occasion of the commemoration day of the great saint Sava of Serbia, the founder and heavenly patron of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The honourable offspring of the saint-generating vine of the Nemanjices and a child of the devout vows of his parents, Prince Rostislav was sent from above in order to transform and sanctify the life of the Serbian people so that the *scattered children of God may be made one* (cf. 11:52), and he as the founder and the first Primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church may become the spiritual father and heavenly patron of the Orthodox Serbs for all times.

This year when Holy Mount Athos is preparing to celebrate the millennium of the presence of Russian monks on it, we in the Russian Orthodox Church remember with love and joy that among them was future Saint Sava, who took monastic vows in the Russian Monastery of St. Panteleimon on the Holy Mount.

Venerating his heavenly patron, the Venerable Sava the Sanctified, the saint did charity to churches and monasteries in the Holy Land and visited them just before his passing away to eternal dwellings. In our tragic days when Christianity in the Middle East is under a threat of destruction, we believe that old shrines are also safeguarded by the prayerful intercession of the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Today, as the faithful of the Church of St. Sava celebrate his memory, I prayerfully wish Your Holiness peace, physical strength and God's inexhaustible help in your Primatial work.

With respectful love in the Lord,

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk
Chairman of the Department for External Church Relation
Moscow Patriarchate

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