Patriarch Kirill congratulates Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine on his 70th birthday

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia has sent the following congratulatory message to His Beatitude Metropolitan Onufry of Kiev and All Ukraine on the occasion of his 70th birthday:

Your Beatitude Beloved in the Lord,

I am glad to cordially congratulate you on your 70th birthday.

Already in your early youth, you decided to dedicate your life to the service of God and His Holy Church. From that time till your mature years, you have followed Christ with courage and patience, faithful to your calling and unshakeably committed to the all-good will of the Heavenly Lord.

The promise of Christ that “everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother… for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life” (Mt. 19:29) is being fulfilled in your life. On all the paths of your service, the Lord has invariably strengthened and blessed you. For the last years, you have gained high spiritual authority, wisdom and rich pastoral experience, which you generously share with fellow archpastors, clergy and the faithful of the Church.

The years of your Beatitude’s 70th birthday have become for you a time of calling to a new lofty feat. It is not an easy feat, but it has had to happen according to the word of the Gospel: “Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl” (Mt. 5:15). In your election to the old and glorious see of the Metropolitans of Kiev, just as in all your life lived in monastic efforts and humble obedience to the Mother Church, we see an edifying action of Divine Providence, which leads a Christian from strength to strength (Ps. 84:7) and enkindles in each of us the fire of faith necessary for our growth till we “attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).

The important service of the Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church entrusted to you at a time difficult for canonical Orthodoxy in Ukraine requires a special ability for sacrifice, courage and devotion. It is not the love of power or vanity of this world that has elevated you to this high see but meekness with which you have emulated Christ the Founder of Feat Who “a bruised reed will not break, and a

smoldering wick will not snuff out" (Mt. 12:20). I trust that this humbleness and all-conquering love of Christ will give you the power to bear without stumbling the primatial cross, so that the words of the holy apostle may be fulfilled: "And the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live forever" (1 Jn. 2:17).

In recognition of your zealous service and on the occasion of your 70th birthday, I believe it fair to award you the Order of St. Sergius (Class I).

On this auspicious day, I ardently pray that the Lord may not leave you without His generous gifts and that He may give your God-loving flock peace and unity in Christ. From my heart I wish your Beatitude spiritual fortitude and good health for many good years.

With love in the Lord,

+ KIRILL

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/50945/