DECR chairman congratulates Metropolitan Onufry on election as Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church

The Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, has congratulated His Beatitude Onufry, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine, upon his election as Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Below is the full text of Metropolitan Hilarion's message.

Your Beatitude, Dear Vladyka:

I wholeheartedly congratulate Your Holiness on your election as Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Knowing Your Beatitude as a wise archpastor and devout man of prayer, a man of enormous spiritual and administrative experience who enjoys high authority among the Orthodox faithful and clergy in Ukraine, the Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church has discerned in you a worthy successor of your teacher and mentor, His Beatitude Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev and All Ukraine.

In this hour so difficult and fateful for Ukraine, the bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church have elected as their father and mentor a committed supporter of church unity, and I see in this fact a beneficial action of the Holy Spirit and a manifestation of God's double mercy for the Orthodox people of Ukraine.

The highly difficult and important service that Your Beatitude are to render involves a great deal of sorrows and trials, everyday selfless concern for the spiritual needs of your flock and tireless opposition to hostile forces seeking to ravage and destroy the spiritual house of Ukrainian Orthodoxy.

I believe that with God's help the people of God will rally around Your Beatitude and that through your efforts in the land of the Holy Prince Vladimir Equal-to-the-Apostles the pain will cease and the enmity will die away and that the flock entrusted to your care will return to peace and unanimity in Christ which cannot be shaken by any elements of this world.

I lift up ardent prayers to the Lord Jesus Christ that He may grant Your Beatitude God's double all-powerful and inexhaustible help in the primatial work ahead of you, the fullness of spiritual gifts, wisdom and sound health for many good years of service at the throne of the Metropolitans of Kiev and All Russia.

With fraternal love in the Lord,

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk

Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations

Moscow Patriarchate

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