DECR chairman's congratulations to Metropolitan Cornelius of Tallinn and All Estonia on the occasion of his 90th birthday

On June 19, Metropolitan Cornelius of Tallinn and All Estonia turns 90 years old. The following congratulatory message on the occasion has been sent to His Eminence by the chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk:

To the Most Reverend Cornelius

Metropolitan Cornelius of Tallinn and Estonia

Your Eminence,

Kindly accept my cordial congratulations on the auspicious and significant event in your life – your 90th birthday.

Most of your life adorned by God's mercy with good longevity has been dedicated to the service of the Church. Your entire life journey is a way of selfless and committed service of Christ and His Holy Church, which you have always carried out with special zeal and fear of God.

From your youth you took the path of this service, which you started in your native Estonia and continued in the diocese of Vologda. In the hard years of atheism, severe trials fell to your lot. But despite all this you remained faithful to the path you had chosen. Subjected to repression by the godless power, you preserved the strength of mind and faithfulness to the Holy Church.

Given an opportunity to return to the service of the Church, for over thirty years, with your characteristic zeal, you performed priesthood in the Estonian land, setting an example of good pastor and mentor.

By God's providence and through the will of the Supreme Church Authority you were called to archpastorship and continued your beneficial church work in the episcopal dignity.

For over quarter a century you have headed the Estonian Orthodox Church, always concerned for the Orthodox flock entrusted to you, supervising it not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be (1 Pet. 5:2).

All these years you have wisely steered the boat of the Estonian Orthodox Church through the rough sea of life. Of special importance were your efforts to normalize the situation of the Estonian Church and to protect her unshakable canonical faithfulness to the Mother Church, conducive to which was the great and well-deserved authority that you enjoy among the Orthodox Estonian flock.

In the moments hardest for the Estonian Orthodox Church, you by your personal example bore witness to the faithfulness to church unity and defended it.

Wholeheartedly greeting you on this remarkable occasion, I prayerfully wish Your Eminence spiritual and physical strength, good health and welfare.

May the Lord Pantocrator, Who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ (Eph. 1:3), grant you His all-powerful help and bless with success your beneficial service for the good of the Holy Church and Orthodoxy in Estonia.

With love in the Lord,

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk

Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations

Moscow Patriarchate

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