



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Department for External Church Relations

DECR chairman sends Christmas greetings to Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, sent Christmas greetings to the Primates of the Local Orthodox Churches: His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople; His Beatitude Pope and Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria; His Beatitude Patriarch John X of Antioch; His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem; His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos-Patriarch Iliya II of All Georgia; His Holiness Patriarch Irineos of Serbia; His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of Romania; His Holiness Patriarch Neofit of Bulgaria; His Beatitude Archbishop Chrysostomos II of Cyprus; His Beatitude Archbishop Hieronymus II of Athens and All Greece; His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania; His Beatitude Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland; His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon of All America and Canada; and also Archbishop Rostislav of Prešov and Slovakia, Locum Tenens of the Metropolitan See of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia. The text reads:

Please accept my heartfelt congratulations on the great feast of the Nativity of Our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

'Christ is born, glorify him! (Canon for the Nativity, Ode 1, Katavasia).

Now there has been accomplished 'the mystery hidden from eternity and unknown even to the angels' (Resurrection Hymn to the Mother of God, Tone 4) - the Word of God, pre-eternally born of the Father, has appeared in the flesh on earth for the salvation of the human race. The Son of God, the Maker of the human person, is born of a Virgin as his Redeemer. 'He takes upon himself my body so that I may be able to accommodate within myself his Spirit, he is clothed in my body and grants me his Spirit so that I, in giving and receiving in return, may find the treasure of life', says St. Gregory of Nyssa (Homily on the Nativity of Christ) in elevating his thought to the Mystery of the Incarnation.

Please be assured of my prayers that that the Saviour, who has been born in Bethlehem, may grant to your God-loved flock well being and an 'abundance of peace' (Ps 72:7), and to Your Eminence bodily strength and his almighty divine aid for many and good years of Primatial ministry.

With reverential love in the Lord,

/+Hilarion/

Metropolitan of Volokolamsk

Chairman

Department for External Church Relations

Moscow Patriarchate

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