



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Department for External Church Relations

Patriarch Kirill's Christmas greetings to heads of non-Orthodox Churches celebrating Christmas according to Gregorian Calendar

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia has sent the following messages of greetings to Pope Benedict XVI of Rome, the head of the Anglican Community Archbishop Justin Welby, the head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland Archbishop Kari Mäkinen, the President of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany Praeses Nikolaus Schneider and heads of other non-Orthodox Christian Churches:

"I cordially greet you on the occasion of the Nativity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

For one to come in touch with the mystery of the Incarnation, one needs to purify one's mind from vanity and to comprehend with one's heart the infinitude of God's love revealed to us in the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. As St. Basil the Great put it, 'Like light through clear glass the power of the Godhead shone through that human body for those whose inner eye was pure. Among such may we also be numbered, so that beholding his radiance with unveiled face we too may be transformed from glory to glory.' God is already with us, but not yet all have opened their spiritual eyes to be able to respond to God's call of love. Christians, emulating the Angels who brought the good news to the shepherds on the Nativity night, should incessantly bear witness before the world by their word and deed to the God-granted salvation: 'For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord' (Lk. 2:11).

I wish you and your flock peace, joy, prosperity and God's abundant grace.

With love in the Lord,

+ KIRILL

PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA

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