Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk expresses condolences over demise of the Primate of Bulgarian Orthodox Church

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, expressed his condolences to the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church over the demise of His Holiness Patriarch Maxim of Bulgaria. The Primate of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church passed away in the Lord at the age of ninety-eight on 6 November 2012.

To: the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church

Your Eminences, beloved in the Lord brothers archpastors,

I was grieved to learn about the demise of His Holiness Patriarch Maxim of Bulgaria and express my deep sincere condolences to you over this great loss.

Patriarch Maxim, the oldest Primate of a Local Orthodox Church, carried on his shoulders the heavy cross of the Patriarchal ministry. Having become a monk in his youth, he devoted his life to serving the Holy Bulgarian Church, with humility, courage, and paternal love bearing the burdens of God's people.

Several generations of the Orthodox faithful in Bulgaria regarded the late Patriarch as the loving and wise mentor. In the years of atheistic regime he endeavoured to protect the dignity of the Holy Orthodoxy and to preserve the Orthodox faith in human souls, and in modern times – to overcome discord and separation. Patriarch Maxim zealously struggled for the unity of the Holy Bulgarian Church and became a living symbol of this unity for millions of the faithful all over the world.

We were especially grieved to learn about the demise of His Holiness Patriarch Maxim because the late Primate had endeavoured to strengthen brotherly relations with the Russian Orthodox Church. He had served in Moscow for many years and later, having become the Primate of the Bulgarian Church, was the guest of the Russian Orthodox Church on numerous occasions. People in Russia and Ukraine, in Belarus and Moldova, and in all other countries in the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate grieve over the great loss that befell the Bulgarian Church.

I happened to meet with His Holiness Patriarch Maxim and was always surprised at this man's greatness of spirit, his inner strength based on the deep prayerful unity with God.

May our Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25), give rest to the soul of His recently deceased servant in the dwelling of the righteous, whence all sickness, sorrow and sighing have fled away.

Eternal and good memory to him!

With brotherly love in the Lord,

+Hilarion

Metropolitan of Volokolamsk

Chairman

Department for External Church Relations

Moscow Patriarchate

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