President Medvedev's message to Patriarch Kirill on occasion of his 65th birthday

The head of the Russian state sent the following message of birthday greetings to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill on the occasion of his 65th birthday:

To: His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

Your Holiness,

I cordially greet you on the occasion of your 65th birthday and wish you success in your lofty Patriarchal mission.

You chose the priestly path at a time difficult for the Russian Orthodox Church. With truly Christian self-sacrifice you have served at all your posts. Your tireless efforts for the good of the Church and the Fatherland, your talent as a theologian and a brilliant speaker, your active public work have gained you deep respect among the episcopate, clergy and millions of your fellow citizens and were decisive for your election to the Primatial throne.

Under your guidance the Russian Orthodox Church has strengthened her authority as one of the most important institutions in the life of Russian society and has made great strides in developing cooperation with the state and in fulfilling important social and educational tasks, especially in asserting spiritual and moral values, an atmosphere of religious tolerance and patriotism and in maintaining civic and inter-ethnic peace. We appreciate the contribution of the Church to the broadening of interreligious dialogue, consolidation of pan-Orthodox unity and rallying of our compatriots abroad.

It is important that the Russian Orthodox Church in her manifold work today seek approaches meeting the demands of the time. And your openness and readiness for dialogue, firm commitment to the traditional Orthodox values of goodness, charity and love of men have played a colossal role in this effort.

I am confident that under your primatial guidance, the Church will continue as responsibly her service for

the benefit of Russia and her people.

I wish you, Your Holiness, good health, spiritual strength and long and active years of life.

My wife joins my greetings,

D. A. Medvedev

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