



Metropolitan Hilarion's congratulatory message to Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople on occasion of 20th anniversary of his patriarchal ministry

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, has sent the following congratulatory letter to His Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople the New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of this election to the patriarchal see:

Your Holiness,

Kindly accept my sincere congratulations on the 20th anniversary of your election to the glorious See of the New Rome.

No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar... but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light (Lk. 8:16). For two decades you have stood on the candle-stick of the Most Holy Church of Constantinople located in the historical center of Orthodoxy, guiding her life in our not so easy an era. Continuing the cause of your predecessors, you have tirelessly borne witness to the unshakable truth of Christianity, making it intelligible for the modern man. During the years of your patriarchal office, a new page has been opened in the history of fraternal relations between the Patriarchates of Constantinople and Moscow.

I remember with gratitude my personal meetings with Your Holiness within the both Patriarchates. I cherish the indelible impression that has been left in my hearth by the prayers together with you in the Island of Imbros, your native land, to which I was kindly invited by Your Holiness, and the feelings I experienced during the pilgrimage I made together with you to Cappadocian shrines. These visits made me feel especially keenly the kinship of spiritual experience that our nations went through during the tragic cataclysms of the 20th century.

On the auspicious day of the 20th anniversary of your patriarchal ministry, I wish Your Holiness from my

heart great mercies from All-Merciful God, good health and prosperity for the benefit of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople.

With respect and love in the Lord,

+ Hilarion

Metropolitan of Volokolamsk

Chairman

Department for External Church Relations

Moscow Patriarchate

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