



## **Patriarch Kirill's greeting message to Ukraine's President Yanukovich**

*His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia has sent the following message of greeting to Ukraine's President Victor Yanukovich on the occasion of his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.*

**Your Excellency, Dear Victor Fedorovich:**

I cordially greet you on the occasion of your 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. For many years of your service for the motherland and people, you have proved to be a talented organizer and diligent worker who has invariably enjoyed the respect of your subordinates. The trials that God often sends to a person during his life journey serve as a test of his morality and will, strength and fortitude. You have repeatedly proved your ability to take upon yourself the heavy burden of public responsibility.

Seeing all this, the people of Ukraine, at a difficult time of socio-economic and political upheavals, have put trust in you by making you the head of state. As the first months of your presidency have shown, you have boldly started solving the most difficult problems.

It is gratifying to note the quick and productive efforts to renew Ukraine's relations with countries united with her by a common history and fate and to take part in building a new system of international relations in Europe. The credit of these achievements belongs in no small degree to you.

I can testify that for the Russian Orthodox Church, Ukraine is the cradle of Christianity, for it is from your land that it began to spread to Holy Rus'. Therefore our Church gives special attention to the needs and concerns of the Ukrainian people, and to the efforts to harmonize church-state relations. I hope that these efforts will continue to be constructive and fruitful and beneficial for all people.

On this day festive for you and your family and friends, I would like to wholeheartedly wish you physical strength and well-being, God's help and success in your service of the motherland. And to the Ukrainian people I wish peace and prosperity.

May the Lord preserve you in good health for many years.

Respectfully,

**+ Kirill**

**Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia**

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