His Holiness Patriarch Kirill congratulates Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Slutsk on his 75th birthday

On 21 March 2010, after the Divine Liturgy celebrated at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia congratulated Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, on his 75th birthday and read out the following congratulatory address.

To His Eminence Philaret, Metropolitan of Minsk and Slutsk,

Patriarch Exarch of All Belarus, permanent member of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church

Your Eminence, beloved in the Lord Vladyka:

I cordially greet you on the day of your 75th birthday and wholeheartedly congratulate you on this remarkable jubilee.

You have begun your ministry to God and people at a time when our Church was fulfilling its salutary mission under difficult historical conditions. However, the Lord was granting wisdom, courage, and strength to you to show an example of faithfulness to the chosen path in life and your calling in all trials.

You have loved the splendour of God's churches and the beauty of the Orthodox divine service from your childhood. Having seen your ardent faith and sincere wish to serve the Church, the Lord brought you to the Moscow Theological schools, where you received theological education and took your monastic vows. Your have stood at the Holy Altar for over half a century bringing the bloodless sacrifice of thanksgiving to God "for all and for everything."

You are fulfilling your archpastoral ministry with piety and awe, caring for ordering the ecclesiastical life of the Exarchate and preaching tirelessly. You are bearing a convincing testimony to the eternal Gospel truths, bringing a considerable contribution to the consolidation of Orthodox unity. You are calling people to live in accordance with the commandments of Christ the Saviour, to vivid and active faith, to unshakeable hope, and sincere love.

You are exerting a lot of efforts to develop a fruitful cooperation of the Church with the secular leaders of Belarus, with scientists, and workers of culture and education, with representatives of charities and

public organizations. You are doing all these and many other things with dignity and kindness inherent in you.

Dear Vladyka, on this remarkable day I prayerfully wish you spiritual and physical strength, success, and abundant God's help in your archpastoral work, which you zealously do for the good of clergymen and flock of many millions of the Byelorussian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate.

May the All-Bountiful Lord keep you in good health for many years!

With love in Christ,

+ KIRILL

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

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