



**The Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
OF NORTH AMERICA**

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January 29, 2009

His Holiness, KIRILL
Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia
Danielov Monastery
Moscow, Russia

Your Holiness:

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. I pray you are in good health as you embark on a new and great journey leading the people and shepherding the flock of Christ in Russia.

It is with great joy that we congratulate you on your election as the new Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia. We have been eagerly awaiting this wonderful news. I am sure that it was not by chance that the more than 700 delegates overwhelmingly chose you to succeed the late Patriarch ALEXY II of thrice-blessed memory. Witnessing this spiritual and electoral process, I am certain that the Holy Spirit was present throughout the deliberations.

Having known you and met you both in Russia and in the United States, I fondly recall our wonderful time together. I have no doubt from our personal meetings and from your writings that you are a firm believer that the Orthodox Church cannot live in an ivory tower, but must reach out to the poor and needy and address the brokenness that exists throughout

the entire world; a brokenness that only our Lord Jesus Christ can mend. At the same time, we pray that you will continue your work for the unity of the entire Church of Russia, knowing that there are foreign elements that are trying to wreak havoc in your venerable Church. As the leader of the largest Orthodox Church in the world, we look to you as we did your predecessor, to ensure the unity of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia and abroad as well as the unity of the entire Orthodox Church. I pray we will have the opportunity to meet and share thoughts and ideas in the future.

On behalf of our Antiochian Synod of Bishops, the clergy and faithful of our God-protected Archdiocese, we wish you the blessings of our Lord and the intercessions of the Mother of God and all the saints who sacrificed so much for Holy Rus'. May God grant you many years to lead The Holy Orthodox Church during these most crucial times!

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Metropolitan Philip". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

+Metropolitan PHILIP
Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America