

Patriarch Ilia of Georgia baptized 700+ children in 56th mass ceremony



His Holiness Patriarch-Catholicos Ilia II of Georgia, the most beloved and trusted man in the nation, has celebrated his 56th mass Baptism ceremony at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Tbilisi, the site of the Georgian Orthodox Church reports.

More than 700 children became the patriarch's Godchildren this time around at the mass ceremony celebrated on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul on July 12. His Holiness now has more than 37,200 Godchildren. More than 600 children were baptized at a previous mass ceremony in July.

With the first mass Baptism on January 19, 2008, Patriarch Ilia commenced his initiative to help improve the dire demographic situation in Georgia caused by post-Soviet abortion rates. Such mass celebrations are held four times a year in which the primate personally baptizes and becomes the Godfather for the third and later children of married Orthodox couples.

According to the latest statistics, the country has a population of 3,718,200.

According to the forecast of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), this number may drop to 2,985,000 people by 2050.



