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## **PATRIARCH ILIA BECOMES GODFATHER TO ANOTHER 700+ CHILDREN IN 63RD MASS BAPTISM**



His Holiness Patriarch-Catholicos Ilia II of Georgia became the Godfather to another 721 children on Sunday, July 26, reports Interpress News.

Since January 2008, His Holiness Catholics-Patriarch Ilia II has been holding several mass Baptism ceremonies a year, in which he personally becomes Godfather to the third and later children of married Orthodox couples.

The Baptisms are part of his initiative to improve the dire post-Soviet demographic situation in Georgia. Pat. Ilia is the most trusted and beloved man in the nation, and families are overjoyed to spiritually unite their children to him.



Sunday's service at the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Tbilisi was the 63rd such mass Baptism. The Patriarch now has 41,630 Godchildren.

The service was held in the courtyard of the cathedral due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Following the service, His Holiness Pat. Ilia addressed the congregation with a sermon and blessed all his new Godchildren.

"I congratulate you, my Godchildren, today. May God bless you. May the Lord bless your families, your parents, your sisters and brothers, and all of Georgia," the Patriarch said.

"The 41,000 Godchildren of the Patriarch are a great power for our people and country, and for each other" Fr. Shalva Kekelia commented to 1tv.ge.

"When these children meet each other, they may not have many of the problems that we face in the country today, even on the part of young people—controversy, misunderstanding. The fact that they are the Godchildren of the Patriarch may also save these young people from confrontation. I think these young people will sow a lot of love in each other," Fr. Shalva added.

