



Communiqué of the meeting of representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church in Poland

On 26 February 2010, representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church in Poland met at the Secretariat of the Polish Episcopal Conference in Warsaw.

The Russian Orthodox Church was represented by hegumen Philipp (Ryabykh), deputy chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for external church relations, and Rev. Sergiy Zvonarev, the DECR secretary for far-abroad countries. The Polish Episcopal Conference was represented by the Primate of Poland Archbishop Henryk Muszyński, General Secretary of the Conference Bishop Stanislaw Budzik, and President of the Bishops' Council for Ecumenism Bishop Tadeusz Pikus.

Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for external church relations, was planning to come to Poland, but could not do it due to the circumstances beyond his control. Prior to the meeting, he had a telephone conversation with Archbishop Henryk Muszyński, co-chair on the Polish side, expressed his regret over his being unable to take part in the meeting, and asked to appoint hegumen Philipp to be a co-chair on the Russian side.

Although these were preliminary conversations, touched upon during them were most important problems of mutual interest. It was agreed to compile a draft of the joint document on the contribution of our Churches to the reconciliation among people of Russia and Poland. Themes of the future dialogue were discussed, and a bilateral commission was proposed to be set up. It was considered helpful to invite representatives of the Orthodox Church in Poland and the Catholic Church in Russia to work in the commission.

Both sides noted an historical importance of the initiative and the conversations, which are the first and very important step on the way to the rapprochement of our Local Churches and reconciliation between our nations. The two Churches hope for the help of God's Providence and intercession of the Most Holy Mother of God.