



## **Tenth theological talks between the Russian Orthodox Church and the German Bishops' Conference take place in Germany**

The 10<sup>th</sup> theological talks between the Russian Orthodox Church and the German Bishops' Conference (Roman Catholic Church) took place in Marienrode, Hildesheim, Germany.

The delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church included Archbishop Tikhon of Podolsk, administrator of the diocese of Berlin and Germany of the Moscow Patriarchate; Metropolitan Philip of Poltava and Mirgorod (Ukrainian Orthodox Church); Bishop Serafim of Bobruysk and Bykhov (Belarusian Exarchate); Rev. Alexy Dikarev of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Mr. Yevgeny Pilipenko, Doctor of Theology, professor of Ss. Cyril and Methodius Theological Institute of Postgraduate Studies; and Mr. Andrei Yefimov and Mr. Alexei Smulov, professors of St. Tikhon's Orthodox University of the Humanities.

The German Bishops' Conference was represented by a delegation consisting of Bishop Dr. Gerhard Feige of Magdeburg; Dr. Nikolaus Schwerdtfeger, Auxiliary Bishop in Hildesheim; Dr. Thomas Löhr, Auxiliary Bishop in Limburg; Prof. Dr. Josef Freitag (Lantershofen); Dr. Johannes Oeldemann, Director of the Johann Adam Möhler Institute in Paderborn; Dr. Dagmar Stoltmann-Lukas, head of the Diocesan Department for Ecumenical Relations of the diocese of Hildesheim; Dr. Markus-Liborius Hermann of the Mission Department of the German Bishops' Conference, Erfurt; and Dr. Claudia Kunz of the Secretariat of the German Bishops' Conference, Bonn.

Invited to the meeting were Rev. Yevgeny Murzin of the Information Department of the diocese of Berlin and Germany; Subdeacon Nikolay Ton, secretary of the Orthodox Bishops' Assembly in Germany; and Dr. Dorothee Kaes of the Secretariat of the German Bishops' Conference, Bonn.

The 10<sup>th</sup> theological talks between the Russian Orthodox Church and the German Bishops' Conference focused on the Mission and Evangelization in Today's World.

During the discussions and exchange of opinions the participants in the meeting expressed similar understanding of the mission notwithstanding the considerable differences in their historical and cultural background. The Church's mission is to serve the salvific will of God revealed in the Son of God Who was sent for the redemption of the world. Despite the fact that the two traditions use different terms, they often mean the same. For instance, the notion of Evangelization in the Catholic theology and the notion

of Churching in the Orthodox theology imply the processes of leading the faithful to more active and profound participation in the life of the Church in the Word and in Sacraments. The discussions helped the participants in the meeting realize that the mission in today's pluralistic society can only be successful if Christians show the real example of witness in faith.

Prior to the meeting, the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church celebrated a prayer service at the convent in Marienrode in the presence of the delegation of the German Bishops' Conference and sisters of the convent. On the second day, the participants in the dialogue visited the cathedral of Hildesheim and its treasury. The delegation of the Russian Church attended an evening Eucharistic service at the cathedral of Hildesheim led by Bishop Dr. Gerhard Feige and a reception afterwards.

To conclude the theological talks, the participants emphasized the necessity to continue the dialogue and decided to hold the next meeting in Russia in June 2020.

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