



## **Metropolitan Hilarion: Unia remains a bleeding wound on the body of Christendom**

The chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, believes that the 13<sup>th</sup> plenary session of the Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue Between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches should result in a theologically correct exposition of differences in the Orthodox and Catholic teachings on primacy and synodality. He spoke about it in his recent interview with the Interfax-Region portal.

At present the Joint Commission is engaged in a discussion on the teaching of primacy and synodality in the Church – an issue on which the Catholic and the Orthodox differ in many points. Thus, the Roman Catholic Church and Orthodox Churches have developed different ecclesiological models: a centralized one based on the recognition of the universal jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome and a model based on the idea of conciliar communion of autocephalous Local Churches. The aim of the Commission is to expose differences between these two models as well as to show what they have in common.

In preparations for the session, the Russian Orthodox Church has elaborated an official stance on the issue of primacy in the Universal Church. An appropriate document was adopted by the Holy Synod on December 25, 2013, setting forth the Orthodox traditional point of view on this issue, based on abundant patristic sources.

“In our view, the meeting of the Joint Commission should not result in adoption of a compromise document but rather in an honest and theologically correct exposition of differences in the teachings on primacy and synodality in the Orthodox and Catholic traditions and a search for the common points which may become a basis for continuation of the dialogue in the future”, Metropolitan Hilarion stressed.

He also said that it is important that the Commission should revisit the issue of church *unia*, the discussion on which was not completed in 2000 due to sharp differences between the two sides concerning pastoral and canonical consequences of *unia*: “Since *unia* still remains a bleeding wound on the body of the Christendom, as the recent events in Ukraine and extremely politicized statements of Ukrainian Greek-Catholic leaders have shown, this theme needs to be revisited”.

*DECR Communication Service*