



## Hierarchs of the three Local Orthodox Churches celebrate at the Intercession church in Minsk

On 4 June 2014, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, who takes part in the 4<sup>th</sup> European Orthodox-Catholic Forum, celebrated Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Intercession of the Mother of God in Kruptsy. Archbishop George of Michalovce and Košice (Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia) and Bishop Siluan who takes care for the parishes of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Italy concelebrated.

Also taking part in the divine service were archpriest Viktor Belyakov, rector of the church, clerics of the Byelorussian Exarchate and members of the delegation of the Department for External Church Relations who have arrived in Minsk together with Metropolitan Hilarion.

After the service Metropolitan Hilarion addressed the worshippers. He greeted them and said: 'We have gathered in Minsk to ponder together with our Catholic brothers over the behaviour of Christians in this world, in which different views and notions are imposed on people. These views sometimes run contrary to the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ. We meet with the Catholics for the sake of witnessing the truth of the Orthodox faith so that they hear us and understand our position as well as our anxiety about the events happening in the world.'

'The Catholic Church has many followers all round the world, including not only our friends but also our foes, belonging to which are first of all the Greek Catholic in Ukraine who come forward against the unity of the Holy Orthodox Church, support schisms and do much to promote present disorder.'

'In this context we must speak frankly with our Catholic brothers, not hiding our thoughts by nice and polite words. We should remind them that there could be no double standards in our relations: either we are friends and allies, or foes and adversaries - *tertium non datur*. We hope that they will hear us and we would bear common witness about the intransigent Gospel values and Christ's commandments on which the life of all Christians and all Christian nations must be built.'

Archbishop George brought greetings and blessing of His Beatitude Rastislav, Archbishop of Prešov, Metropolitan of the Czech Lands and Slovakia.