



Primate of Russian Orthodox Church completes his visit to Poland

On 19 August, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill completed his visit to Poland. Seeing him off at the airport were His Beatitude Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland, hierarchs of the Polish Orthodox Church, and Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Poland, Alexander Alekseyev.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill **arrived in Poland** on 16 August 2012, at the invitation of His Beatitude Metropolitan Sawa, the Primate of the Polish Orthodox Church. Accompanying the Primate of the Russian Church on his visit was the delegation which included Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administrative Secretariat; Archpriest Nikolay Balashov, DECR vice-chairman; Hegumen Philaret (Bulekov), DECR vice-chairman; Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations; Vladimir Legoida, head of the Synodal Information Department; Protodeacon Vladimir Nazarkin, assistant to the DECR chairman; and Mikhail Kuksov, acting head of the patriarchal personal secretariat.

On his arrival in Warsaw, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrated a prayer service at the Cathedral of St Mary Magdalene. After that, the Primates of the Russian and Polish Orthodox Churches addressed each other with words of greeting.

That same day His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with the Presidium of the Polish Catholic Bishops' Conference.

In the evening the Primate of the Russian Church had a conversation with Bronisław Komorowski, President of the Republic of Poland, at the Belvedere Palace in Warsaw. Participating in the meeting were His Beatitude Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations.

On behalf of the Polish President a grand dinner was given in honour of Patriarch Kirill. Present at the dinner were members of the official delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, Orthodox and Catholic hierarchs, and representatives of governmental and public organizations.

In the morning of 17 August, **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill met with His Beatitude Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland and hierarchs of the Polish Orthodox Church**. In his welcoming address, Metropolitan Sawa called Patriarch Kirill's visit to Poland a long-awaited event of great

importance to the Polish Church and her relations with the Russian Mother Church.

During his visit, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill met with Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Polish Senate. They discussed the issue of protecting Christian moral values and the necessity of taking common actions in the face of secularism.

That same day a solemn **ceremony of the signing of a Joint Message to the Peoples of Russia and Poland** took place at the Royal Palace in Warsaw. The document was signed by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Metropolitan Jozef Michalik, President of the Polish Bishops' Conference. The Message, which cannot be ranked among theological or inter-church documents and does not deal with doctrinal matters, calls for reconciliation and mutual forgiveness in the spirit of Christian love.

Then Patriarch Kirill laid wreaths at the Memorial to Soviet Soldiers-Liberators in Warsaw and to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

In the evening of 17 August, the Primate of the Polish Orthodox Church gave a dinner in honour of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill.

The Primate of the Russian Church also visited the Russian Embassy in Warsaw and discussed with Alexander Alekseyev, head of the Russian diplomatic mission in Poland, the issues of strengthening the relationships between the two countries, including cultural exchange and contacts between the Russian and Polish faithful.

On 18 August, the His Holiness Patriarch Patriarch Kirill arrived in Białystok. At the Cathedral of St Nicholas, Patriarch Kirill and Metropolitan Sawa venerated the holy relics of the Holy Child-Martyr Gabriel of Białystok.

At the Białystok Church of the Holy Spirit, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrated a prayer service. Praying in the Church were the Primate and hierarchs of the Polish Orthodox Church, and members of the Moscow Patriarchate's delegation, accompanying Patriarch Kirill on his visit to Poland.

After that, accompanied by Metropolitan Edward Ozorowski of Białystok (Roman Catholic Church), His Holiness Patriarch Kirill visited the monument to Catholic priest Jerzy Popiełuszko who became a victim of repressions in 1984.

At the Branicki Palace, a solemn dinner was given in honour of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia on behalf of Tadeusz Truskolaski, president of Białystok.

That same day the Primate of the Russian Church visited the Supraśl monastery in Białystok. A requiem service was said in the crypt of the Annunciation Church, at the burial place of the abbot of the Monastery, Archbishop Miron (Chodakowski), who died with Polish President Lech Kaczynski in the plane crash in 2010.

Later that day, Patriarch Kirill visited the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Hajnówka town. Greeting Patriarch Kirill at the entrance to the Cathedral were representatives of local authorities, members of the Orthodox youth community, and the numerous faithful.

In the evening of 18 August, on the eve of the feast of the Holy Transfiguration, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Beatitude Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland arrived at the Convent of Ss Martha and Mary on Holy Mount Grabarka. The All-Night Vigil was celebrated at the walls of the Cathedral of the Holy Transfiguration.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill completed his visit to Poland, having participated in **the celebrations on Mount Grabarka on the feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord** , God and Saviour Jesus Christ. On 19 August, the Primates of the Russian and Polish Orthodox Churches celebrated the Divine Liturgy on Holy Mount Grabarka. Praying at the service were tens of thousands of pilgrims who came there from all over Poland and abroad.

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