



## Metropolitan Hilarion takes part in Interconfessional Conference on Family Problems

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On January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, currently in Lithuania with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and at the invitation of the Catholic Episcopal Conference of Lithuania took part in the Interconfessional Conference on Family Problems. The Conference, sponsored by the Catholic Episcopal Conference of Lithuania and the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, took place at the conference hall of the Catholic Archdiocese of Kaunas.

Over 300 participants attended the Conference, while over 50,000 thousands heard it broadcast live on Radio Maria.

Metropolitan Hilarion, Archbishop Sigitas Tamkevičius of Kaunas (Roman Catholic Church), Bishop Mindaugas Sabutis of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania, and Rev. Adolfas Grušas, chancellor of the Kaunas Archdiocese were members of the Presidium.

Taking part in the Conference also were Archbishop-Metropolitan of Vilnius Cardinal Juozas Audrys Bačkis; Apostolic Nuncio to Lithuania Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi; Bishop Gintaras Grušas, secretary general of the Episcopal Conference and military ordinary for Lithuania; Auxiliary Bishop of Kaunas Jonas Ivanauskas; Bishop Jonas Kauneckas of Panevėžys; Kaunas Mayor Andrius Kupčinskas; rector of the Kaunas State University Dr. Zigmantas Lideka; deputies of the Seim, Lithuanian intellectuals, students, and clerics of the Diocese of Vilnius and Lithuania of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Greetings from Cardinal Ennio Anronelli, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, and from Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, were read out at the beginning of the Conference.

In his report "To Be or to Have?" Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk paid a special attention to the fact that market laws in modern liberal society impudently trample on moral and family values.

The DECR chairman's report was followed by prolonged applause.

Mayor of Kaunas Andrius Kupčinskas reminded the participants of the appearance of a young hieromonk Hilarion, rector of the Annunciation Cathedral, on Kaunas TV in 1991, when he called soldiers not to shoot at unarmed people. The Mayor added that the residents remember this act of courage and highly appreciate the now Metropolitan Hilarion's present efforts aimed at maintaining Interconfessional peace and accord in Lithuania and presented the DECR chairman with the Burgomaster Jonas Vileišis Order as an expression of gratitude.

Archbishop Sigitas Tamkevičius, Bishop Mindaugas Sabutis, and Rev. Prof. Andrius Narbekovas presented reports on family problems in Lithuania at present.

Final communiqué of the Conference was issued.

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