



## **DECR chairman sends condolences over death of Cardinal Tomas Spidlik**

*Cardinal Tomas Spidlik died on 16 April 2010. A Czech theologian who lived abroad, he was a world-renowned expert in the Christian spirituality of the East and recognized representative of Czech culture. He was born in Czechoslovakia in 1919. A graduate of Brno University, he joined the Society of Jesus (the Jesuit Order) in 1940. After the war, he studied theology in Maastricht. In September 1940 he was ordained priest. Since 1951 he was an anchorman at Vatican Radio. During 38 years he was the spiritual director of the Czech Seminary in Rome. In 1955 he defended his doctoral dissertation and taught Patristics and Eastern Spirituality.*

*His entire life was devoted to the service of Christian unity. In 2003, Pope John Paul II made him cardinal. The most prominent among his characteristic features was his exceptional ability to establish personal contacts and friendly relations. He was known as a deeply spiritual person and experienced mentor. Father Spidlik visited Russia on many occasions. In 1992 he met with the ever memorable Patriarch Alexy II and was an honorary member of the St. Petersburg Society of Byzantine-Slavic Studies.*

*In connection with Cardinal Tomas Spidlik's death, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, has sent the following message of condolences:*

**The Most Reverend Walter Cardinal Kasper**

**President**

**Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity**

**The Reverend Adolfo Nicolas**

**Superior General**

**Society of Jesus**

Your Eminence,

Reverend Father:

Please accept my deep condolences over the death of Cardinal Tomas Spidlik.

Having taken his monastic vows at Velehrad, the place where the relics of St. Methodius the Apostle of the Slavs, lie in rest, Father Tomas devoted all his long life to the study of Byzantine theology and tradition of the Christian East. Cardinal Tomas Spidlik enjoyed well-deserved international renown as one of the most prominent Roman Catholic experts in Orthodox spirituality.

He was well known and appreciated in Russia, which he visited on many occasions, and in the Russian Orthodox Church, which he always held dear. With the death of Father Tomas, humanities have lost an outstanding scholar, the academic world a bright teacher and his spiritual children a wise and experienced pastor. It is my conviction however that his rich theological legacy and the works of his numerous disciples will continue to familiarize Western Christians with Orthodox tradition.

Father Tomas's life journey ended in the days of Easter, which this year is celebrated by East and West at the same time. May our Risen Lord Jesus Christ give rest to the soul of the faithful servant of Christian unity in the dwellings of the righteous. Eternal memory be to him!

With love in Risen Christ,

**+ Hilarion**

**Metropolitan of Volokolamsk**

**Chairman**

## **Department for External Church Relations**

### **Moscow Patriarchate**

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