DECR representatives visit Polish Embassy in Russia to pay tribute to the memory of the members of Polish delegation who died in plane crush near Smolensk

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On 12 April 2010, the DECR deputy chairman hegumen Philipp (Ryabykh), the DECR acting secretary for far abroad countries Revd. Sergiy Zvonarev, and DECR staff member V. Matiyashin visited the Embassy of Poland in Russia. They laid flowers, signed the book of condolences and expressed their deep sympathy to the representatives of Poland with the death of the Polish delegation led by the President of Poland Lech Kaczyński near Smolensk on 10 April 2010. The delegation included Polish Orthodox and Catholic clergymen.

Russian Orthodox clergymen conveyed sincere condolences of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, to the Ambassador of Poland to the Russian Federation Jerzy Bar and the special envoy Tomasz Turowki. His Holiness, who was on an official visit to the Orthodox Church of Alexandria, expressed his compassion and sympathy to the people of Poland in his address to the acting President of Poland Bronislaw Komorowsky, the Primate of the Polish Orthodox Church Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland, and to the President of the Polish Episcopal Conference Archbishop Józef Mihalik of Przemysl.

Addressing Ambassador Bar, hegumen Philipp expressed profound sympathy for the people of Poland felt by the believers of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and other countries. "We mourn together with you and pray for the departed. Many Orthodox believers bring flowers to the representations of the Republic of Poland, light candles in churches, and pray. I believe that we shall be able to overcome this tragedy only if we do our utmost not to allow bad weather to darken relations between our nations." Fr. Philipp added that on April 7 in Katyn "our people offered joint Paschal prayers for the victims of repressions rejoicing in mutual understanding, while today we feel common grief across national borders."

The DECR deputy chairman mentioned common work of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Roman Catholic Church started several months ago at the document dedicated to the reconciliation of the Russians, Byelorussians, and Poles.

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