

## The Unity of the Orthodox Church made manifest in Rio de Janeiro



On the evening of Thursday 24 October participants in the Russian religious and cultural festival ‘Russian Days in Latin America’ arrived in Brazil.

After notable visits to Cuba, Costa Rica and Venezuela, the visit to Brazil began with the liturgy for the patronal feast of St Zinaida’s Orthodox church in Rio. The liturgy was led by Metropolitan Hilarion of the Church Outside Russia. Metropolitan Platon of Argentina, Archbishop Mark of Khust and Vinogradovo (in Carpatho-Russia), Bishop Paul of Ryazan and Kasimovo, Bishop Evtikhiy of Domodedovo and Bishop John of Caracas concelebrated with him. Thus, three bishops of the Church outside Russia and three bishops of the Church inside Russia prayed together. Also present were Archimandrite Tikhon of Sretensky Monastery in Moscow, the choir of the Monastery, many clergy, laypeople and a large contingent from the Brazilian Diocese of our brother Polish Orthodox Church, headed by Archbishop Chrysostom. Brazilians, Russians, Serbs, Arabs, Greeks and Romanians were all present, showing the unity of the Church with these united bishops.

After the Saturday evening Vigil Service, on Sunday the clergy and people took part in an outdoor liturgy at the foot of the famous 38-metre high statue of Christ, that towers 700 metres above Rio and is the most famous manmade sight and symbol of Brazil. There, led by Metropolitan Hilarion, large numbers of clergy and people prayed for Brazil, Russia and the unity of all within the Orthodox Church and those who fell away from her 1,000 years ago. All this took place before the Wonderworking Sovereign Icon of the Mother of God. This Icon miraculously appeared in 1917 in order to show Orthodox people worldwide that after the deposition of Tsar Nicholas, the Mother of God would look after all Orthodox in the difficult times to come.

After Brazil, the delegation will move on to Argentina, again witnessing to the unity of the Orthodox Church in events that were unthinkable only a few years ago. Then Orthodox Russia

lay in Soviet ruins, suffering persecution and atheist interference in her internal affairs. As for Orthodox unity in the diaspora, it was compromised by the jurisdictional squabbling which began immediately after the fall of the Russian Orthodox Empire in 1917. It was after this tragedy that the unity and leadership that had been provided by the Russian Orthodox Church to all nationalities was destroyed by ambitious and masonically-minded individuals from outside the Russian Orthodox Church. Now the Orthodox world looks forward to the restoration of that unity.



Calling Brazilians of all origins to unity in the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia