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## **Latvia: ecumenical celebration for the Day of Independence. Mgr. Stankevich (Riga) describes his dream for the country**

“Big dreams are a gift that God puts in people’s hearts”: this was said by Zbigneu Stankevich, archbishop of Riga, as he commented on the readings for the ecumenical celebration in the Cathedral of Riga, to celebrate the Day of Restoration of Latvian Independence (18 November). Then, he shared his “dream for Latvia”, which sounds, though, very much like that of many other people: first and foremost, “an inclusive and listening society in which no one is silenced as soon they express a different opinion to mine”. Then, Stankevich dreams of a “harmonious development of Latvia”: since “where there’s God, there’re harmony and order”, “if everyone learnt to coordinate their actions with at least the Ten Commandments, this would infinitely benefit our society, and this could pave the way to the development of an ideal Latvia”. In the archbishop’s dream, there are also inherently “strong” people, respect for human rights, and the exercise of rights and freedoms “in a responsible way and in the interaction with other people”. For a dream-like Latvia, “a political culture would be needed in which people are chosen not based on their party, ideological belief or economic group, but based on their skills and human qualities”. Another dream is about everyone being “ready to put themselves out there to make their dreams come true, to take small steps every day, thus overcoming weakness, insecurity and laziness”.

Valentina Bombelli