Delegation of abbots and abbesses of the Coptic Church visits holy sites of Niznhy Novgorod metropolia



On 16th – 19th September 2019, while in Russia on a pilgrimage, a delegation of abbots, abbesses and nuns from the monasteries and convents of the Coptic Church visited a number of churches, monasteries and historical sites in the territory of the Niznhy Novgorod metropolia.

On 16th September, the delegation arrived in the Convent of the Holy Trinity and St. Seraphim in Diveyevo and venerated its shrines: the wonderworking “Eleousa” Icon of the Mother of God and the relics of St. Seraphim of Sarov and of the venerable and blessed women of Diveyevo. The guests from Egypt also walked in a prayerful procession along the Holy Canal of the Theotokos and visited St. Seraphim’s spring not far from the convent. In the evening they met with Hegumenness Sergiya (Konkova), abbess of the Diveyeo abode, and the sisters.

On 17th September, while in the Diveyevo convent, the delegation members attended the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Trinity Cathedral. After the service and repast, Hegumenness Sergiya told the guests about the present-day life of the abode and the obediences of the Diveyevo nuns. That same day the delegation members visited the convent's Skete of the Holy Martyrs Florus and Laurus.

On 18th September the representatives of the Coptic Church arrived in the city of Arzamas. There they visited the Cathedral of the Holy Resurrection and the Convent of St. Nicholas, where they were warmly greeted by its abbess, Hegumenness Filareta (Shevchenko).

That same day the delegation arrived in Nizhny Novgorod, where they visited the ancient kremlin and the Church of Archangel Michael – the oldest church in the city, as well as the Ascension Monastery of the Caves.

The pilgrims also visited the Cathedral of the Holy Right-Believing Prince Alexander Nevsky and the residence of Metropolitan Georgy of Nizhny Novgorod and Arzamas, where they met with the head of the Nizhny Novgorod metropolia. The archpastor asked the guests to convey his greetings and warm wishes to the Primate of the Coptic Church and expressed his hope for further successful and fruitful development of the bilateral relations between the two Churches, and between representatives of the Russian and Coptic monasticism in particular.

"The revival of monastic traditions is currently one of the major tasks for the Russian Orthodox Church," Metropolitan Georgy said, "Today we are actively restoring old churches and monasteries desecrated in the Soviet period and opening new ones. Yet, the main damage that the atheists inflicted upon our Church and our homeland is of spiritual nature, to wit: the propagation of atheism and anti-humanism. All together we are praying and working to overcome this terrible crisis, finding help in the heavenly intercession of the host of new martyrs and confessors of the 20th century. The blood of martyrs and self-sacrifice of confessors is what providentially unites the historical paths of our two Churches and helps us see in one another real brothers and sisters in Christ. Sufferings for the faith of Christ and for His Most Holy Name always lead us from the sad end of Golgotha to the beginning of new life, to the Radiant Resurrection of Christ. And today I address you with the greeting of our venerable and God-bearing Father Seraphim: 'My joy, Christ is risen!'"

Bishop Daniel, abbot of the Monastery of St. Paul of Thebes, assistant to the Primate of the Coptic Church for monasteries and monasticism, cordially thanked Metropolitan Georgy of Nizhny Novgorod and Arzamas and on behalf of Patriarch Tawadros II invited him to visit ancient abodes in the Nitrian Desert as the head of one of the monastic delegations of the Moscow Patriarchate. Bishop Daniel also noted the deep-rooted ties between the Russian and the Coptic monasticism that constitute the true spiritual treasure of the two Churches.

In the evening the pilgrims departed for Moscow.

Accompanying the guests from the Coptic Church in their visit to the Nizhny Novgorod metropolia were Bishop Feofilakt of Dmitrov, abbot of the Stavropegic Monastery of St. Andrew in Moscow; Hegumenness Yelizaveta (Pozdnyakova), abbess of the Convent of Saints Martha and Mary; Archpriest Alexander Malafeyev, head of the Organizing Department of the Nizhny Novgorod diocese; Hieromonk Yermogen (Korchukov), oikonomos of the Zaikonospassky Stavropegic Monastery; and Mr. Sergey Alferov, staff member of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations.

In the evening of 19th September the delegation left Moscow for Cairo. At the Domodedovo Airport the pilgrims were seen off by Archbishop Feognost of Kashira, chairman of the Synodal Department for Monasteries and Monasticism of the Russian Orthodox Church; Hegumenness Iulianiya (Kaleda), abbess of the Stavropegic Convent of the Conception of the Most Holy Mother of God; Hegumenness Yelizaveta (Pozdnyakova); Hieromonk Yermogen (Korchukov); Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations; and Mr. Ruslan Akhmatkhanov, DECR staff member.

The Coptic delegation included: Bishop Daniel, abbot of the Monastery of St. Paul of Thebes, Patriarchal assistant for monasteries and monasticism – head of the delegation; Bishop Dametrios, abbot of the Monastery of the Life-Giving Cross in Al Minya; Bishop Marcos, abbot of the Monastery of St. Damian in Damietta; Hieromonk Dawoud el-Anthony, representative of the Coptic Church to Russia; Dr. Anton Milad, representative of the Coptic Patriarchate; Tamav Kiria, abbess of St. Mercorios Convent in Cairo; Nun Marteria from St. Mercorios Convent in Cairo; Tamav Takla, abbess of St. Girgis Convent in Old Cairo; Nun Kiria from St. Girgis Convent in Old Cairo; Tamav Adroses, abbess of St. Tadros Convent in Cairo; Nun Youana from St. Tadros Convent in Cairo; Tamav Athanasia, abbess of St. Girgis Convent in Zweila; Nun Kiria from St. Girgis Convent in Zweila; Tamav Bacilia, abbess of the Virgin Mary Convents in Zweila and Elbeheira; Nun Helpes from El Batool Convent in Malawi; Nun Mehraty from St. Sara Convent in Al Minya; and Nun Bestes from St. Demiana Convent in Albliana.

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