Primate of Malankara Church completes his visit to Russia



From August 31 to September 5, 2019, the Primate of the Malankara Church, His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Mar Thoma Paulose II was on a visit to Russia during which he had a meeting with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

There were also negotiations with Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate department for external church relations (DECR).

His Holiness the Catholicos and his delegation visited the Cathedral Church of Christ the Saviour and the Moscow Kremlin.

At the Ss Martha and Mary Convent, the guests from India were received by the mother superior of the convent, Sister Elizabeth (Posdnyakova) and were shown the facilities used for social service.

At the Novospassky Monastery, the Catholicos was welcomed by its abbot, Bishop Dionisy of Voskresensk. The guests saw the burial-vault of the Romanov noblemen and prayed at the miracle working icons of the Mother of God called ‘The All-Queen’. Then the abbot gave a reception in honour of the Malankara Church delegation.

On September 3, the guests came to the Sretensky Monastery and the Sretensky Theological Seminary and visited the St. Alexis of Moscow Central Clinic, to which they were welcomed by Bishop Panteleimon of Orekhovo-Zuevo, head of the Synodal Department for Church Charity and Social Service, and the head physician and director of the clinic Alexy Zarov. ‘His Holiness Patriarch Kirill advised that we should visit your clinic as the Malankara Church is very much concerned for the social work and service in hospitals. It has ten hospitals and two medical colleges. In 2016, our Church opened a center for oncological research. Perhaps in the future, as we maintain our relationships, we will have an opportunity for exchanging experience between doctors and nurses’, the Catholicos said.

The delegation of the Malankara Church also visited the hospital church of Our Lady of Tikhvin. They made a tour of palliative aid wards and talked to patients.

On September 4, the Catholicos arrived in the St. Sergius Laura of the Holy Trinity to venerate the holy relics of St. Sergius of Radonezh and to say a prayer for the reposes of the soul of Patriarch Pimen at his tomb. People in the Malankara Church cherish the memory of the visit made by Patriarch Pimen to India in the last century 70th, which became an important landmark in the development of the bilateral relations.

When at Moscow Theological Academy, the delegation saw the Church Archaeology Room, medical unit and library. At the Grand Assembly Hall, they met with students. They were welcomed by the rector of the academy, Bishop Pitirim of Zvenigorod. His Holiness the Catholicos congratulated the students on a new academic year and admonished them to seek the knowledge of God not only in theological studies but also through prayer, saying, ‘We cannot come to the knowledge of God only through theology. On the other hand, if we try to pray it means that we more and more seek to come to know Him’. Metropolitan Zachariah Nikolovos spoke about the importance of dialogue between the two Churches and wished them as future parish priests to become leaders of their parishes who are ready to lead their flocks in accordance with God’s will. ‘Remember our Church and pray for her. And may God bring our Churches to greater unity’, he said.

Then the students were introduced to the history of relationships between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Church. Father Abraham Thomas told them about the main landmarks in the history of his Church and answered questions. Hieromonk Stephen (Igumnov), DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations, acted as moderator of the meetings.

Later that day, the guests visited the Sofrino Art-Production Works.

On September 5, the delegation of the Malankara Church departed for India. They were seen off at the airport by Bishop Dionisy of Voskresensk, Hieromonk Stephen (Igumnov) and R. Akhmatkhanov, DECR secretariat for inter-Christian relations.

The party who accompanied the high guests included Metropolitan Zachariah Mar Nikolovos, head of the Malankara Church department for external church relations; Metropolitan Yuhanon Mar Diascoros, secretary of the Malankara Church Holy Synod; Rev. Abraham Thomas, secretary of the Malankara Church department for external church relations; and Rev. Aswin Zefrin Fernandis, head of the Malankara Catholicos's protocol service; Rev. Jiss Jonson, personal secretary to His Holiness the Catholicos; Mr. Jacob Mathew, member of the Malankara Church Council; Mr. Kevin George Koshi, head of the communication service of the Malankara Church department for external church relations; Dr Cherian Eapen, a representative of the Malankara diaspora in Russia.

DECR Communication Service

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