11th meeting of Joint Commission for Orthodoxy-Islam dialogue takes place in Tehran



On 5-7 May 2018, the 11th meeting of the Joint Commission for Orthodoxy-Islam Dialogue took place in the capital of Iran. This year its topic was Religion and Environment. The commission holds meetings once in two years alternately in Moscow and Tehran.

In compliance with the decision of the Holy Synod of 7 March 2018, the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church consisted of Metropolitan Feofan of Kazan and Tatarstan, head of the delegation; Archimandrite Alexander (Zarkeshev), rector of the Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Tehran; Archpriest Lev Semenov, head of the Chair of Theology of the Moscow State Linguistic University, head of the Religious and Educational Centre of St. Tikhon's Orthodox University of the Humanities; Rev. Dimitry Safonov, secretary for interreligious relations of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Rev. Alexy Sorokin, acting rector of the Church of the Blessed Xenia of Petersburg in

Beskudnikovo, Moscow; Mr. Alexei Osipov, distinguished professor at the Moscow Theological Academy; Mr. Oleg Kalimullin, consultant at the Department for External Church Relations; and Ms. Yelena Dunayeva, senior researcher at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Metropolitan Feofan was accompanied by the rector of the Church of the Holy Dormition in Kazan, Archpriest Alexy Krayevsky.

On May 5, the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church met with Dr. Abouzar Ibrahimi Torkaman, head of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO). The participants in the meeting which took place at the ICRO Centre for Dialogue between Religions and Cultures in Tehran discussed various issues pertaining to the longstanding dialogue between the two religious communities and its prospects.

Later that day the first session of the Commission for Orthodoxy-Islam Dialogue was held under the chairmanship of Metropolitan Feofan of Kazan of Tatarstan and Dr. Abouzar Ibrahimi Torkaman, head of the ICRO. Metropolitan Foefan read out a message of greetings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. In his address, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church's delegation focused on the Orthodox understanding of the ecological crisis. "It is essential to cultivate cultural attitude to and care for the environment at all levels of society, from schoolchildren to businessmen and politicians. Such transformation of society would be impossible without the participation of traditional world religions, such as Orthodoxy and Islam," Metropolitan Feofan said.

Dr. Abouzar Ibrahimi Torkaman emphasized the significance of the meeting for the Iranian side and highlighted the ecological problems as seen by the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization. As Dr. Torkaman noted, he attaches particular importance to the promotion of dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church.

At the concluding session that took place on May 7, a communiqué was adopted. In this document the participants in the meeting pointed out that the adherents of the world religions ought to facilitate the considerate use of natural resources in accordance with the teaching of their religions. As the speakers noted, nature is the foundation of human existence and the environmental protection is a manifestation of gratitude to the Maker. Both sides agreed that the process of developing technologies and economies in today's world must go on without damaging the environment. The communiqué emphasizes the important role and responsibility of religious leaders and their followers in influencing the decision makers in such sphere as the relationship between man and nature.

The commission's next meeting will be held in Russia in 2020.

In his concluding address, Dr. Torkaman thanked the members of the Russian Orthodox Church's

delegation for the active participation in the meeting. In his turn, Metropolitan Feofan of Kazan and Tatarstan thanked Dr. Torkaman for hospitality and a high level of organization at the meeting.

The meeting aroused a considerable interest in the Iranian mass media. Attending the sessions were dozens of the Iranian scholars and students of the Iranian higher educational institutions.

DECR Communication Service

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/47480/