Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church holds its second session in Astana



On 27-29 June 2017, the second session of the Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church took place at the Religious, Cultural and Administrative Centre of the Kazakhstan metropolitan area in Astana. The delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church included Bishop Gennadiy of Kaskelen, the Commission's co-chairman; Archpriest Oleg Davydenkov, professor at St. Tikhon's Orthodox University of the Humanities; Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), secretary for inter-Christian relations of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Mr. Ilya Kashitsyn, a staff member of the DECR Secretariat for Interreligious Relations. Among the

participants in the meeting representing the Coptic Church were Metropolitan Serapion of Los Angeles, the Commission's co-chairman, dean of St. Athanasius & St. Cyril Coptic Orthodox Theological School, and Bishop Kyrillos, vicar of the diocese of Los Angeles.

The participants in the session emphasized the key importance of the meeting between His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Holiness Coptic Patriarch Tawadros in Moscow on May 23, 2017, for the promotion of the bilateral relations between the two Churches.

The Commission members noted with satisfaction a successful development of contacts between representatives of the Coptic and the Russian monasticism, and agreed to foster cooperation in this sphere.

Among the issues discussed at the meeting were joint projects in social ministry. To exchange experience in this sphere, a delegation of the Coptic Church visited Russia in March 2017. Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church are expected to pay a return visit to Egypt.

Among the important aspects of the Commission's work was cooperation in the academic sphere. The Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church successfully implement the student exchange programs. Representatives of the Coptic Church take part in theological conferences convened at Ss. Cyril and Methodius Theological Institute of Postgraduate Studies. The Coptic Church intends to invite the Russian Orthodox theologians to its scholarly forums.

The Commission members discussed prospects of organization of the bilateral consultations between theologians of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church to promote the dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the family of the Oriental Churches.

The participants in the meeting expressed their concern over the ongoing terror attacks on the faithful of the Coptic Church in Egypt, such as terror attacks on churches in Cairo, Alexandria, Tanta, an attack on a bus with pilgrims in the Minya region, as well as attacks on the Coptic Christians in Sinai. The Coptic delegates thanked the Russian Orthodox Church for the support that was expressed in the messages sent to the head of the Coptic Church by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, as well as for the efforts made by the Moscow Patriarchate to defend Christians in the regions where they are being subjected to persecutions.

An official press-release was adopted at the conclusion of the meeting. A report on the results of the meeting will be presented to the Holy Synods of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church.

The Commission plans to hold its next session in Los Angeles in February 2019.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/48358/