



## **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria**

On 19 November 2016, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros of Alexandria who had arrived in Russia to take part in the celebrations marking the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church.

His Beatitude was accompanied by Metropolitan Meletios of Katanga; Metropolitan Athanasios of Kyrene, representative of the Patriarch of Alexandria to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia; and protopresbyter Athinodoros (Papaevripiades).

Representing the Russian Orthodox Church at the meeting that took place at the Patriarchal residence in St Daniel's Monastery, were also Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Bishop Leonid of Vladikavkaz and Alania; archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR vice-chairman; Rev. Mikhail Asmus, DECR consultant; and Rev. Anatoly Churyakov, DECR interpreter.

Greeting the high guest, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said, in particular, “We are always glad to see Your Beatitude. We recall your visits to the Russian Church, especially the most recent one, during which you were at the Solovki Monastery, in Irkutsk and Yekaterinburg. You saw the places that no other first hierarch, except the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, has ever visited... Perhaps, you are the only first hierarch who comes to Russia as a pilgrim, to venerate its shrines. It is a sign of your love for Russia, of your bond with our country, our people and our Church, established at the time of your service as representative of the Church of Alexandria.”

As His Holiness noted, the Church of Alexandria has all African countries under its jurisdiction, and therefore His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros, as the head of the Church, often makes missionary trips over the African continent. “We see the fruits of this mission: new parishes are being established, new archdioceses and dioceses created. You carry out this missionary work not among the Europeans who, either temporarily or permanently, live in Africa, but among the local population, which is of great importance.”

His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros expressed his joy at the opportunity to visit Russia and take part in the celebrations, and assured His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of his affection, respect and gratitude for the assistance rendered to the Patriarchate of Alexandria facing serious challenges these days.

His Beatitude shared with those present his recollections of his first meeting with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill that took place as far back as 1972, and expressed his conviction that their friendship in Christ would last forever.

The Patriarch of Alexandria told about his educational and pastoral activities in Africa, for instance, about his month-long trip to Tanzania where he had met with people living in remote towns and villages. His Beatitude also mentioned a new diocese established in the heart of the African continent and shared with Patriarch Kirill his dream of opening a theological academy for young people from all over Africa and of establishing a printing house to publish books in 256 languages to give an opportunity to common and needy people to learn about the word of Christ.

His Beatitude also mentioned his recent meeting with a delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate that had undertaken pilgrimage to Egypt’s holy sites. The pilgrimage was a part of the programme aimed at promoting dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church.

The participants in the meeting discussed various issues of bilateral relations and pan-Orthodox cooperation.

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