Head of Syriac Orthodox Church completes his visit to Russia



On 13 November 2015, His Holiness Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, Primate of the Syriac Orthodox Church, completed his visit to Russia.

The delegation accompanying the Primate of the Syriac Orthodox Church on his visit included Mor Severius Hawa, Metropolitan of Baghdad and Basra; Metropolitan Mor Dionysius Jean Kawak, Patriarchal Assistant, Director of the Department of Ecumenical Relations of the Syriac Orthodox Church; Archbishop Mor Philoxenus Yusuf Cetin, Patriarchal Vicar in Istanbul and Ankara; Mor Nicodemus Daoud Sharaf, Archbishop of Mosul; Archimandrite Raban Roger-Youssef Akhrass, Director of the Syriac Studies Department; and Archimandrite Raban Joseph Bali, Patriarchal Secretary and Syriac Media Office Director.

Seeing off His Holiness Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem II at the Sheremetyevo Airport were Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate; Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), DECR vice-chairman, Hegumen Feofan (Lukyanov),

head of the DECR Protocol Service; Cor-bishop Samano Odisho, rector of the Assyrian church of St. Mary in Moscow; Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), DECR Secretary for Inter-Christian Relations; and DECR staff members, Mr. Sergey Alferov and Mr. Denis Baturin.

Among those seeing off the head of the Syriac Orthodox Church was also H.E. Riyad Haddad, Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Russian Federation.

While in Russia, the members of the delegation of the Syriac Orthodox Church visited the Laura of the Holy Trinity and St Sergius, where they had a meeting with its abbot, Archbishop Feognost of Sergiyev Posad. On their visit to the Moscow theological schools, the guests met with Archbishop Yevgeny of Vereya, chairman of the Education Committee of the Russian Orthodox Church and rector of the Moscow Theological Academy and Seminary. The representatives of the Syriac Orthodox Church also visited the Novospassky and the Donskoy Monasteries, and the Convent of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God in Moscow.

On the last day of the visit, the delegation hold a meeting with Mr. Alexei Pushkov, chairman of the State Duma Foreign Affairs Committee. The participants in the meeting discussed the current situation in Syria and Iraq and the plight of Christians in the Middle East, in particular.

The head of the Syriac Orthodox Church told what persecutions Christians are undergoing, noting that the whole civil population of Syria and Iraq is suffering. According to him, Russia’s actions, aimed at combatting international terrorism in Syria, have brought hope to the Syrian people. To illustrate this, Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem II told that not long ago citizens of Sadad, a town in the neighbourhood of Homs, had repelled an attack by the ISIS militants.

Mr. Pushkov informed the guests of the diplomatic efforts that Russia makes, using, in particular, interparlimanentary channels, to draw the attention of the world community to the plight of Christians in the Middle East.

DECR Communication Service

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