



Russia's President meets with Primate of the Orthodox Church of Alexandria



On February 10, 2013, while on a visit to Egypt, Russia's President Vladimir Putin met with His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria and All Africa.

Present at the meeting were Russia's ambassador to Egypt S. Kirpichenko, Presidential press secretary D. Peskov, Metropolitan Niphont of Pilousion (Patriarchate of Alexandria), and the Rev. Victor Kulaga, Moscow Patriarchate representative to the Patriarch of Alexandria.

Greeting his interlocutor, the head of the Russian State said that he was glad to meet His Beatitude Patriarch Theodoros again. The old Patriarchate of Alexandria carries out its ministry in a region with the predominant Muslim population, Mr. Putin noted. It was also noted that in Russia, in which most of the population confess Orthodoxy, there is a considerable number of those who belong to Islam and people of various religions, just as in Egypt, live together, being natives of the country.

‘As you may know, relations between people of different faiths have been developing in our country for centuries, for about a thousand years. These relations are characterised primarily by mutual respect and support and are based on our common moral values’, President Putin stressed, noting that the present leaders of Egypt share this attitude.

‘I hope that this common approach to relations between representatives of different religions will help us in our joint efforts to maintain common moral values and ideals’, President Putin said.

In the course of the talk, President Putin made special mention of the efforts made by the Primate of the Church of Alexandria to help solve humanitarian problems encountered by people in the region and to strengthen and develop good relations with the Russian Orthodox Church.

‘People in Russia know you and you know Russia very well because you used to live in the Soviet Union and speak Russian’, Mr. Putin said to His Beatitude.

On his part, the Primate of the Orthodox Church of Alexandria thanked Mr. Putin for his attention to the Patriarchate of Alexandria and support for the Orthodox Church in Africa. ‘I would like to thank you for your love for my country, Egypt’, His Beatitude said, pointing to the present Egyptian leaders’, especially President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi’s, good attitude to Christians.

His Beatitude also spoke about the social service carried by the Patriarchate of Alexandria in African countries and the efforts for preserving interreligious peace.

Patriarch Theodoros asked Mr. Putin to convey assurances of fraternal love to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. ‘We are a great family of Orthodox Churches’, he stressed.

Speaking about his long service as representative of the Patriarchate of Alexandria in Odessa, His Beatitude Theodoros said, ‘I always remember it’.

In conclusion, the President of the Russian Federation and Patriarch of Alexandria exchanged tokens of the meeting.

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