His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with Cardinal Angelo Scola

On 12 November 2013, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia met with Cardinal Angelo Scola, Archbishop of Milan. They were joined in the meeting, which took place at the Patriarchal residence in St. Daniel's Monastery, by Archbishop Paolo Pezzi of the Archdiocese of the Mother of God in Moscow, Ms Giovanna Paravicini, a staff member of the Apostolic Nunciature to the Russian Federation, and Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), vice chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations.

His Holiness Kirill addressed Cardinal Scola, saying that both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church are concerned about the situation with spiritual life in Europe and other countries. 'We are deeply worried about the situation of Christians in the world and not only where they suffer, for instance in the Middle East, Africa or Asia, but also where they experience hidden pressure under a slogan of tolerance and multiculturalism, where Christian symbols are ousted, the world 'Nativity' is forbidden, and people cannot come to the place of their job with a cross as it allegedly offends the non-believers and adherents of other religions. At the same time we see how the non-believers fill all information space with the philosophy of life that has nothing to do with faith.'

'The preservation of Christian Europe and of the sources of Christian civilization is our common task today," His Holiness underscored and continued: 'I believe that our Churches never had so many important reasons for common work as today. We welcome the position of His Holiness Pope Francis on many problems.'

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church mentioned the identity of positions on the situation of Christians in the Middle East and on the crisis in Syria in particular and highly appreciated Pope Francis' position on the problem. 'I hope that we will work together for peace and security of religious rights of the minorities in the region,' he said. His Holiness reminded the audience of common challenges to Christians and noted the efforts of the Roman Catholic Church undertaken in pastoral work in Europe in spite of all difficulties. 'WE understand this only too well, as we had lived in difficult years in the history of our Church in the 20th century.'

Cardinal Angelo Scola noted His Holiness Kirill's profound understanding of the situation with Christian preaching in Western Europe and said that many people today do not understand the meaning religious freedom. He recalled the 1700th anniversary of the Edict of Milan that proclaimed religious tolerance in the Roman Empire.

‘Our religion is the religion of God, who wants to accompany people in their life. Therefore we consider the church wedding and family important. We recognize evil and sin and call them by their real names, wishing to be witnesses of God’s mercy.’

He added that he remembers a lecture of Metropolitan Kirill (now His Holiness the Patriarch) delivered in Venice in 2007 on the social teaching of the Russian Orthodox Church. Cardinal Scola underscored the meaning of His Holiness Kirill’s efforts and of Pope Francis undertaken for the settlement in Syria and for support of Christians living in the Middle East. ‘Many Christians are suffering in the region: they are ousted from their homes and their churches are destroyed. I think that we in the West do not say enough on the problem.’

Archbishop of Milan noted as a positive factor the work of the Moscow Patriarchate communities in the territory of his diocese and expressed his willingness to render assistance in arranging their parish life.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/52047/