



Russian Orthodox Church gives Orthodox Encyclopedia to Iranian cultural center in Moscow

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On September 22, 2010, Rev. Sergiy Zvonarev, DECR secretary for far-abroad countries, and D. Safonov, a DECR staff member, met with the director of the cultural representation at the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Abuzar Ebrahimi Torkaman, to present him with a set of the Orthodox Encyclopaedia volumes as a special gift from the Orthodox Encyclopaedia Center.

Father Sergiy explained the purpose of this edition and the work of the academic team working on it. Dr. Ebrahimi thanked him for the gift and told his guests about the publications on the Russian Orthodox Church and Russian sights he helped to prepare. He also spoke about many-volume publication projects devoted to Islam carried out at present in Iran.

They also discussed the trip a Russian Orthodox delegation is to make to Teheran in October 2010 for the 7th sessions of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission for Dialogue. The session will discuss the theme 'The role of religion in the life of the individual and society'.

Father Sergiy spoke of the great importance attached in the Russian Church to interreligious dialogue including the Church's dialogue with the Islamic community of Iran, which has lasted for already 15 years now. 'Our dialogue does not depend on political changes. It is beyond politics. It is a guarantee of its sustainability', he said, adding that in spite of the difficulties arising from the international sanctions imposed on Iran, the respectful dialogue between religious communities in the two countries can and must develop further.

Using the experience of the Orthodoxy-Islam commission, the Russian Church seeks today to conduct dialogue with traditional Muslim communities in other countries as well, in Turkey and Egypt in particular. Dr. Ebrahimi agreed with the need to continue and deepen dialogue in the joint Russian-Iranian commission and stressed its importance for the two nations.

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