



## Students of Moscow higher education institutes - representatives of the Coptic community in Egypt visit Department for External Church Relations



On September 3, 2021, a group of young believers of the Coptic Church who study in Moscow higher education institutions visited the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations.

Hieromonk Stephen (Igumnov), DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations, met with them. Participating in the meeting were also Hieromonk Daud el-Antoni, representative of the Coptic Church in Russia, and Dr. Anton Milad, special representative of the Coptic Patriarchate.

Father Stephen congratulated the guests on the beginning of a new academic year and told them about the history and today's life of the Russian Orthodox Church, the work of the Department for External Church Relations and joint projects as part of the dialogue between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Coptic Church.

As he pointed out, the priority areas of this dialogue include cooperation in academic sphere and youth

contacts. The Russian Orthodox Church not only develops the students' exchange between Coptic and Russian theological schools, but also welcomes the training of Egyptian Christians in secular higher education institute of the Russian Federation and actively promotes the programs for their sending for training to Russia.

Addressing the guests, Hieromonk Stephen underlined that for the Russian Orthodox Church the fact of their training in Russia is of special importance, as the concerns and needs of these students become an object of her attention. This is the attitude of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and this meeting was held at his instruction.

During the confidential talk, each of the guest spoke about the impressions of his stay in Russia and the successes and difficulties of student's life. On Father Stephen's proposal, they discussed a plan of activities aimed to give Egyptian students a deeper knowledge of Russia and her spiritual tradition; they also agreed to hold such meetings on a regular basis.

In conclusion of the meetings, Father Stephen wished the guests success in their studies so that it may benefit the development of relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church and between Egypt and Russia. Each student was presented with an icon of the Our Lady of Valamo and a copy of Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk's book Catechism. A Concise Guide on the Orthodox Faith.

Today, representatives of the Coptic community are students of such universities as People's Friendship University of Russia, National Research University 'Higher School of Economics', Bauman Moscow State Technical University, Southern Federal University, Crimea State University, North Caucasus Federal University, Baltic Federal University, Privolzhski Federal University. Tyumen State University.

*DECR Communication Service*

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