



Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk meets with Coptic Patriarch Tawadros II



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On November 7, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relation of the Moscow Patriarchate, visited the residence of the Coptic Patriarchs to meet with the Primate of the Coptic Church, His Holiness Patriarch Tawadros II.

Metropolitan Anthony conveyed to His Holiness Tawadros II greetings and best wishes from His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, noting that for him as chairman of the Department for External Church Relations it was an honour and joy to arrive with His Holiness's blessing to Cairo in the days when the First Hierarch of the Coptic Church celebrated his 70th birthday and the 10th anniversary of his election to the Patriarchal See. In honour of these dates and consideration of the

outstanding contribution made by His Holiness Patriarch Tawadros to the development of relations between the Coptic Church and the Moscow Patriarch and on the instruction of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, the DECR chairman presented to the Primate of the Coptic Church one of the highest awards of the Russian Orthodox Church - the Order of Glory and Honour, Degree I.

His Eminence thanked His Holiness Patriarch Tawadros for the warm welcome given to the delegation of nuns from Russia who recently came on a visit to Egypt led by Bishop Leontiy of Syzran and Shygony and for the assistance given by the Coptic Church to the parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in Cairo and other cities in Egypt.

The Primate of the Coptic Church asked His Eminence to convey to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill his cordial gratitude for the high award and attention. His Holiness congratulated Metropolitan Anthony on his appointment as chairman of the DECR and pointed to the existence of considerable potential for further strengthening friendly and confidential relations between the two Churches. His Holiness recalled with warmth his visits to Russia in 2014 and 2017, his brotherly contacts with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and his meetings in Cairo with the Moscow Patriarchate's delegations, which became a good tradition already long ago.

'I think highly of the work of the Commission for Dialogue between our two Churches. I give a high value to its projects for the exchange of monastic delegations and in the area of academic cooperation. I personally keep up with every meeting of the Commission with the latest one held quite recently in Moscow with a great success. I am very glad that the Commission members were received in audience by my beloved Brother, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill. I am deeply moved by the kind attention the Primate of the great Russian Orthodox Church gives to our Christian people in Egypt and especially to its faithful residing in Russia. I take great delight in receiving news that our students trained in the best universities in Russia are in continued fraternal care of the Russian Church. The transfer of facilities in downtown Moscow to our community is a historic event for the whole Coptic Church. In this difficult time, we as never before are called to continue broadening and strengthening our fraternal ties, praying for each other and for the God-commanded unity of all faithful Christians', His Holiness said.

In their conversation, they discussed a broad range of matters of mutual concern.

Attending the meeting from the Coptic Church were Bishop Daniel of Maadi, General Secretary of the Holy Synod; Bishop Julius, responsible for the public and social service of the Coptic Church; Bishop Michael, rector of the Coptic Theological Academy and Seminary in Cairo; Hieromonk Kyrillos Anba Bishoy, head of the Coptic Patriarch's Personal Secretariat; Hieromonk Dawoud El Antoni, representative of the Coptic Church in Russia; Dr A. Milad, adviser to His Holiness Patriarch Tawadros; and heads of the Coptic Patriarchate's administrations of the parishes abroad and the media service.

From the Russian Orthodox Church there were Hieromonk Stephen (Igumnov), DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations, and Rev. Alexander Ershov, assistant to the DECR chairman, who accompanied Metropolitan Anthony during his trip to Egypt.

After the meeting, Metropolitan Anthony and his delegation visited the Cathedral of the Holy Apostle Mark in the territory of the Coptic Patriarchate and venerated his honourable relics in the crypt of the church.

The DECR chairman also visited the Cathedral of the Holy First-Hierarchical Apostles Peter and Paul (El-Botroseya). In its crypt, there is the burial-vault of B. B. Ghali, the 6th UN Secretary General, and former Prime Minister of Egypt B. P. Ghali, who were parishioners of the Coptic Church.

His Eminence Anthony visited the place of the death of 29 martyrs, victims of the terrorist action carried out in December 2016.

On the same day, the visit of Metropolitan Anthony to Egypt was completed.