His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to Russia



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On March 9, His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, met with the Plenipotentiary and Extraordinary Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Russian Federation, HE Ahmed Abdulrahman Al-Saati, at the Patriarchal Residence in the St. Daniel Monastery.

They were joined by Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations.

Among the participants in the meeting were also Mr. I. E. Levitin, assistant to the President of the Russian Federation; Mr. L. E. Slutskiy, chairman of the State Duma Committee for International Affairs. There were also Mr. A. G. Guryev, Vice-President of the Russian Union of Chemists, and Mr. A. A. Guryev, President of the Russian Association of Fertiliser Producers.

Ambassador Ahmed Abdulrahman Al-Saati was accompanied by Ms Galli Monastyreva, Secretary General of the Bahrain - Eurasian Friendship and Business Association, and Mr Hossam Saloum Eddin, councillor of the Bahrain Embassy.

Greeting the guest, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill pointed to the friendly nature of the relationships between Russia and Bahrain with their prerequisites to further development of cooperation.

His Holiness made a special mention of the fact that the Kingdom of Bahrain gives considerable attention to the development of interreligious dialogue and good relations between various religions.

He said that the theme of interreligious relations is very important for people in Russia because of the variety of religions present in her territory. 'The Russian Orthodox Church ensures a peaceful interaction of the religious groups and shows respect to all of them. We maintain very good and business-like relations with most of them. A platform has been created for multilateral interreligious dialogue, namely, the Interreligious Council in Russia', His Holiness stated.

HE Ahmed Abdulrahman Al-Saati conveyed to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill greetings from the King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain.

'The principle of freedom in the Kingdom of Bahrain is a firm policy pursued personally by King Hamad and on the whole was pursued by the kings of Bahrain for many centuries', the diplomat stressed. He also mentioned the International Peaceful Co-existence Center, which was established a few years ago at the initiative of King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and which carries his name. The aim of this center is to propagate the values of peace and co-existence of followers of various religions.

The ambassador conveyed to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill an invitation from the monarch to visit the Kingdom of Bahrain, noting, 'Please accept the best wishes to Your Holiness from His Majesty the King - the wishes of good health, happiness and long life for the benefit of peace and prosperity of Russia and the whole world'.

Mr Ahmed Abdulrahman Al-Saati also spoke about the peace-making potential of the Russian Orthodox Church in settling conflicts shaking the world and the situation in Ukraine has occupied a special place among them. He noted that the King of Bahrain has expressed his readiness 'to help achieve peace through negotiations including through his personal contacts or through contacts with the structures which can help it'.

Addressing the ambassador, Patriarch Kirill asked him to convey to His Majesty his respect and

esteem.

His Holiness reminded the guest that the Russian Orthodox Church put a high value on the development of relations with the Islamic world. ‘As you know, in our country we have a large Muslim community. We thank God for the fact that in Russia there have never been heavy conflicts between Orthodox Christians and Moslems’, the Patriarch stated. He recalled that in the Russian Empire, outstanding representatives of Islam used to serve at court. They held high ranks and awards. Today too, inter-ethnic and interreligious relations are a significant priority in the domestic policy in Russia.

‘The Russian Orthodox Church considers the fostering of relations with the Muslim community to be an important part of her work’, His Holiness stressed. He also pointed out the role of Russian Muslims in the development of relations with the Orthodox Church.

‘Interreligious peace, cooperation, Orthodox-Muslim fraternal relations in Russia promote the stability of the internal situation in the country’, Patriarch Kirill summed up.

In the course of further conversation, the sides dealt with the topic of interreligious cooperation and other matters of mutual concern.

Photos by the Patriarchal Press Service

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