



## His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with Metropolitan Damaskinos of São Paulo and All Brazil



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On August 23, after the Divine Liturgy celebrated at the Cathedral of the Dormition in the Moscow Kremlin, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' met with Metropolitan Damaskinos of São Paulo and All Brazil of the Orthodox Church of Antioch who was accompanied by Rev. Paisios Dias, Rev. Antônio José Neaime, chair of the Administrative Council of the São Paulo Archdiocese, and advisor Bassam Elias.

They were joined at the meeting by H.E. Bashar al-Jaafari, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Syrian Arab Republic to the Russian Federation.

Attending the meeting were also Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow

Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR); archpriest Dionisy Kazantsev, secretary to His Holiness the Patriarch for the Moscow region; and deacon Sergy Monakhov of the DECR secretariat for inter-Orthodox relations.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill welcomed Metropolitan Damaskinos and his suite and stated that the Russian and Antiochian Orthodox Churches had centuries-old friendly relations.

"I would like to note the role being played by the Antiochian Church in Latin America and yours, Your Eminence, in particular. You know that there is our diocese there, and its closest fellow workers and brothers are representatives of the Patriarchate of Antioch. There are no conflicts. There is a fraternal support both on the level of the two Patriarchates and on the level of Latin America," said His Holiness.

He shared reminiscences of his visit to Latin America in 2016 and of the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral in São Paulo which he celebrated together with Metropolitan Damaskinos. His Holiness wished the metropolitan "God's aid in governing the numerous flock in Latin America."

Metropolitan Damaskinos expressed his joy over an opportunity to meet with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill on the feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos and thanked him for assistance and support being rendered to the people of Syria by Russia and by the Russian Orthodox Church.

"We keep the Orthodox faith together with the Russian people and believe that through the prayers of the Most Holy Theotokos the Lord would bestow special abundant blessings to all people and to all those who pray," he said.

Patriarch Kirill thanked Metropolitan Damaskinos and wished the Orthodox Church of Antioch prosperity and God's aid and fortitude in keeping the Holy Orthodoxy to clergymen and pious faithful.

"Russia and Syria are friendly countries. They have common understanding of the geopolitical situation and full understanding of the importance of relationships and cooperation between Russia and Syria for solving the problems of the Middle East. An assistance Russia is giving to Syria today is the selfless assistance. This is not the kind of help which the colonialists used to give to their colonies. Russia does not demand any political control or economic preferences. Russia sincerely supports the Syrian people in their struggle for integrity of their state. We wish them God's aid in this struggle," said the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church.