



## Primate of the Malankara Church arrives in Russia



**DECR Communication Service, 03.09.2023.**

On September 3, the Primate of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan, arrived in Russia at the invitation of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus'.

The delegation accompanying His Holiness consists of Metropolitan Zachariah Mar Nicholovos of the Northeast American Diocese, Vice-President of the Department of Ecumenical Relations, President of the Working Group for Coordinating Bilateral Relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Church; Metropolitan Yuhanon Mar Chrysostomos of Niranam, Holy Synod secretary; Metropolitan Yuhanon Mar Demetrios of Delhi, President of the Department for Ecumenical Relations; Metropolitan Abraham Mar Stephanos of the Diocese of United Kingdom, Europe and Africa, Vice-President of the Department for Ecumenical Relations; Chorebishop Philip Thomas, vicar of the Cathedral of St. Mary the Theotokos in Kuala Lumpur; Rev. Abraham Johns, principal secretary to His

Holiness; Rev. Saji Varughese, Priest Trustee; Rev. Aswin Zefrin Fernandis, secretary of the Department of Ecumenical Relations; Rev. Johnson Baiju, secretary to His Holiness; Mr. Biju Oommen, Church Association Secretary; Mr. Jacob Mathew, Working Committee member; Mr. Kevin George Koshy, programme secretary for international relations of the Malankara Church.

The Primate of the Malankara Church and his suit were met at Moscow Domodedovo airport by Metropolitan Leonid of Klin, Patriarchal Exarch of Africa, co-chairman of the Working Group for Coordinating Bilateral Relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Church; hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), secretary for inter-Christians relations of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), secretary of the Working group; and hierodeacon Petr (Akhmathanov), a DECR staff member.

Scheduled in the programme of the visit are talks with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus'; meetings with Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, the DECR chairman, and with Metropolitan Dionisiy of Voskresensk, chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; visits to churches and monasteries in the Metropolitanates of Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The visit will last till September 8.

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The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church belongs to the family of the Ancient Oriental Churches that includes Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, Ethiopian, and Eritrean Churches. According to tradition, the Malankara Church was founded by Apostle Thomas in the 1<sup>st</sup> century and is headquartered in Kerala, a state in India. His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Paulose II of the blessed memory visited Russia in 2019. During talks with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' an agreement on establishing the Working Group for Coordinating Bilateral Relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Church was reached.

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Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/90700/>