DECR Chairman meets Primate of Malankara Church of India



DECR Communication Service, September 5, 2023.

On September 4 in the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk met with the Primate of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, who is in Russia on official visit.

Present at the meeting were also members of the delegation accompanying His Holiness Catholicos:

His Eminence Metropolitan Zachariah Mar Nicholovos of New York, Co-Chairman of the Working Group for the coordination of bilateral relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Church; His Eminence Metropolitan Yuhanon Mar Chrysostomos of Niranam, secretary of the Holy Synod; His Eminence Metropolitan Yuhanon Mar Demetrios of Delhi, President of the Department of Ecumenical Relations; His Eminence Metropolitan Abraham Mar Stephanos of United

Kingdom, Europe and Africa; Very Rev. Philip Thomas Cor Episcopa, Vicar of the Cathedral of St Mary Theotokos, Kuala Lumpur; Principal Secretary to His Holiness Catholicos of Malankara Rev. Fr. Abraham Johns; Priest Trustee, MOSC, Rev. Fr. Saji Varughese; Secretary of the Department of Ecumenical Relations, Member of Bilateral Commission MOSC-ROC Rev. Fr. Aswin Zefrin Fernandis; Secretary to His Holiness Catholicos of Malankara Rev. Fr. Johnson Baiju; Church Association Secretary, MOSC, Mr. Biju Oommen; Working Committee Member, MOSC, Mr. Jacob Mathew; Programme Secretary, International Affairs, MOSC, Mr. Kevin George Koshy; representative of India's diaspora in Russia Mr. Ipen.

The Russian Orthodox Church was represented by Metropolitan Leonid of Klin, Patriarchal Exarch for Africa, Co-Chairman of the Working Group for the coordination of bilateral relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Church; Hieromonk Stephen (Igumnov), DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations; Hierodeacon Petr (Akhmatkhanov), DECR staff member.

Speaking on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, Metropolitan Anthony warmly welcomed the high guests to the Department for External Church Relations, the oldest and largest synodal body of the Moscow Patriarchate. His Eminence Anthony told the guests about today's life of the Russian Orthodox Church and its external work, where the dialogue with the Malankara Church has traditionally been an important part, especially after the Working Group for the coordination of bilateral relations was established in 2019. "The group establishment gave a new impetus to our dialogue", head of the DECR pointed out.

In his response His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III pointed to the high level of fraternal relations between the Malankara Church and Moscow Patriarchate. He mentioned that key to the growing relations was sending students from the Church of India to the Leningrad Theological Academy in the second half of the 20th century. One of the students was to become the future Catholicos of Malankara. His Holiness reminisced about meeting Kirill, the future His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, who back then was the rector of the Leningrad Theological Academy. His Holiness Catholicos also mentioned his participation in the dialogue between Orthodox and Oriental Churches and expressed hope that the dialogue will continue.

After that they discussed the persecution against Christians in various regions of the world and the need to unite the Churches' efforts to support suffering brothers and sisters. Metropolitan Anthony thanked the Primate and the hierarchs of the Malankara Church for their recent statements in support of Metropolitan Jonathan of Tulchin and Bratslav.

His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III pointed to the importance of joint protection of traditional moral values, the Russian Orthodox Church being one of the most active defenders of these

values, in the opinion of His Holiness.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the DECR Chairman wished the high guests a blessed stay in the Russian land and a fruitful meeting with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

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