Patriarch Kirill Holds Negotiations With Primate of The Malankara Church



DECR Communication Service, September 6, 2023.

On September 6, after the Divine Liturgy in the Dormition Cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin, a grand reception took place in the Patriarchal Chambers of the Kremlin's Palace of Facets, with negotiations between His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Primate of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III.

Among those present were 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.

The Russian Orthodox Church was represented at the negotiation by Metropolitan Dionisy of Voskresensk, Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; 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; Archimandrite Philaret (Bulekov), DECR Vice Chairman; Hieromonk Stephen (Igumnov), DECR secretary for inter-Christian relations, secretary of the Working Group for the coordination of bilateral relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Church; Hierodeacon Petr (Akhmatkhanov), DECR staff member.

Also present at the reception were representatives of clergy, who concelebrated with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill at the liturgy.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church cordially greeted His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, stressing that the relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Church have deep historical roots.

“Together we belong to the great spiritual tradition of the Christian East. The relations between our Churches made good progress, thanks to such history-making figures as Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov) of Leningrad and Novgorod and Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios (Varghese), an outstanding hierarch and theologian”, His Holiness said addressing the high guest.

Patriarch Kirill recalled that he first met Metropolitan Mar Gregorios in 1968 in Uppsala at the Fourth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches. “Already back then he proved to be an outstanding theologian and religious leader. To me, especially memorable was his contribution to the work of the Fifth General Assembly which took place in 1975 in Nairobi”, His Holiness pointed out, stressing that the relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Church have been actively growing ever since.

His Holiness highly praised the brotherly relations which have always been there between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Church of India. His Holiness also expressed hope that the bilateral cooperation between the two Churches will progress successfully in the future.

“We value our common past which has enriched both of our Churches, but we would like to see the present and the future to be no less meaningful for our Churches”, Patriarch Kirill added, “And, of course, we are open to many kinds of common work, among them I would like to repeat my invitation for your students to be trained in our schools”.

The Primate of the Russian Church also pointed out the high level inter-state relations between Russia and India.

“Russia and India are civilizations of great culture, with enormous intellectual, human and cultural potential. Russia and India today are are real partners who do not seek to profit fr om each other, nor seek to exploit each other’s weaknesses, but interact in policies and economy in total honesty. That is why we have a positive factor for development, including bilateral religious relations”, Patriarch Kirill stated.

In his turn, His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III thanked the Primate of the Russian Church for hospitality. “I am very pleased to be here today”, he said to Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, “It brings back memories of my times spent in Leningrad when Your Holiness was the rector of Leningrad Theological Academy. I have good memories of the years of my study there. Back then I found myself abroad for the first time, and Russia was the first country I visited. Russia became my second Motherland and remains such to this day”.

The high guest affirmed that India is seeing growth in the veneration of the saints of the Russian Orthodox Church, in particular Venerable Seraphim of Sarov and Blessed Matrona of Moscow.

“My predecessor, His Holiness Catholicos Paulose II of eternal memory deeply venerated St. Matrona of Moscow. There are many other hierarchs, priests as well as lay people who came to venerate St. Matrona”, His Holiness Catholicos said.

“We also hold dear our memories of Professor Nikolai Zernov, who was a key figure in bridging together the Russian Orthodox Church and Oriental Churches. During my study years in Leningrad, I was also lucky to meet Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov), who made a long-lasting impression on me”, the Primate of the Malankara Church said.

His Holiness Catholicos expressed gratitude to the Russian Orthodox Church for the bilateral dialogue, wh ere the successful academic interaction is a key part. Currently two representatives of Malankara Church are students of Saint Petersburg Theological Academy.

Patriarch Kirill thanked the high guest for his kind words, noting in particular that the Russian Orthodox

Church is looking for like-minded people throughout the world, so that together they could preserve the ever-living spiritual and moral values. His Holiness stressed that the dialogue between the Russian Orthodox and the Malankara Church of India, “based as it is on common spiritual values, especially on common peoples’ devotion, has all the possibilities to be successful”.

“We need to develop bilateral relations in the area of interaction and cooperation of our theological schools and in the exchange and sharing of our pastoral practices. For many priests of the Russian Church, your pastoral experience would be valuable, especially in provinces, in the countryside, and in places where people’s lives are not easy. I think that representatives of the Malankara Church might be interested in learning more about our pastoral work not only in Moscow or Saint Petersburg, but out there, too, in the vast lands of Russia. I am confident that such exchange of experience can be useful for both Churches”, the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church summed up.

The talk then continued on a wide range of topics.

After the reception the two exchanged presents for the memory of the event.

Pictures by the Press Service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

---

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/90712/