



## Primate of the Assyrian Church of the East paid a visit to Russia



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On the 24<sup>th</sup> of October – 1<sup>st</sup> of November, His Holiness Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Awa III, Primate of the Assyrian Church of the East, at the invitation of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow All Rus', paid an **official visit** to Russia, visiting Moscow and the limits of the Vladimir Metropolis with his accompanying delegation. This is the second **visit to Russia** by His Holiness Catholicos Mar Awa since his accession to the Patriarchal Throne.

At the Moscow Patriarchate's Danilovskaya Hotel, which became the place of the Assyrian Catholicos' stay in Moscow, His Holiness and the accompanying delegation were solemnly received by the hotel's manager, Abbess Theophany (Miskina).

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of October, the head of the Assyrian Christians visited the Savvino-Storozhevsky

Stavropegial Monastery. The delegation was welcomed at the gates of the monastery by the vicar, Archimandrite Pavel (Krivonogov). The distinguished guest venerated the relics of Venerable Savva Storozhevsky and visited the Zvenigorod Museum-Reserve, viewing the exposition "Ancient Zvenigorod" and the exhibition of works by the People's Artist of the Russian Federation I.I. Glazunov "Vaults, Images and Countenances".

On the same day, Catholicos Mar Awa, his entourage and representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate visited the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in the Russian Federation, where the head of the Iraqi diplomatic mission, K. al-Janabi, gave a reception in honour of the Assyrian Catholicos.

On the 26-28 of October, the delegation of the Assyrian Church of the East **stayed in the Vladimir Metropolis**, visiting Vladimir, Suzdal and Murom. The Catholicos Mar Awa met with Metropolitan Tikhon of Vladimir and Suzdal, Bishop Nil of Murom and Vyaznikovsk, Bishop Stefan of Kovrov, Vicar of the Vladimir diocese, and members of the Assyrian community of the Vladimir region.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of October, the Primate of the Assyrian Church of the East led the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Moscow Assyrian Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Mat Maryam) - the Representative Office of the Assyrian Church in Russia. His Holiness Catholicos Mar Awa performed the rite of the great consecration of the renovated temple altar and Divine Liturgy in the company of members of the Assyrian delegation. Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church who accompanied the Assyrian First Hierarch were present, as well as the Ambassador of Iraq to Russia K. al-Janabi, the leadership of the Representation of the Kurdistan Region in Russia and the Consul of the State of Palestine in the Russian Federation J. Malki. At the end of the service a solemn act, reception and meeting of the Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Awa with members of the youth movement of the parish of Mat Maryam were held in the representative premises of the temple complex. The hosts of the festive evening were the rector of the temple, the representative of the Assyrian Church in Russia, Chorbishop Samano Odisho and the head of the parish community churchwarden V.V. Ilyushin.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of October, a delegation from the Assyrian Church of the East visited the churches of the Patriarchal Chernigov Palace and the Ss. Cyril and Methodius Institute of Postgraduate Studies. The meeting of Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Awa with the members of the faculty and students took place in the Assembly Hall of the Institute. The meeting was followed by a conversation between the distinguished guest and Archpriest Maxim Kozlov, Rector of Institute, during which the parties discussed issues of academic co-operation between the educational institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East.

In the context of his visit to the Institute of Postgraduate Studies, Catholicos Mar Awa also had a conversation with S.G. Alferov, a lecturer of the joint course of the DECR and the Institute called

"Ancient Oriental Churches". The Primate of the Assyrian Church welcomed the teaching of this course, noting that the initiator of its establishment back in the early 1970s at the Moscow and Leningrad Theological Academies was Metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov), of blessed memory - mentor of His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' Kirill. His Holiness the Catholicos also approved the idea of creating a special educational programme within the framework of the course, dedicated to the study of the heritage of the Syrian Christian tradition, and expressed readiness to assist in the organisation of joint thematic events, including in Iraq.

On the same day at the Novospassky Stavropigial Monastery in Moscow, the Primate of the Assyrian Church of the East was cordially received by Metropolitan Gregory of Voskresensk, the First Vicar of the Patriarchate of Moscow and All Rus'. The Assyrian delegation venerated the wonder-working icon of the Mother of God "Vsetsaritsa" and other shrines of the Novospassky monastery and toured its main churches.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Awa III **met** with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' at the Patriarchal and Synodal Residence in the Danilov Stavropegial Monastery in Moscow. In consideration of his outstanding personal contribution to the development of bilateral relations between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Moscow Patriarchate, Catholicos Mar Awa was awarded a high award of the Russian Orthodox Church - the Order of Glory and Honour (1st degree), and the representative of the Assyrian Church in Russia, Chorebishop Samano Odisho - the Order of Glory and Honour (3rd degree).

During his stay in the Russian capital, His Holiness Mar Awa III also paid courtesy visits to D. Mustafa, acting representative of the Government of the Kurdistan Region (Iraq) in Moscow, and to Sheikh Mahdi Mosuli, representative of the spiritual leader of Iraq's Shiite community, Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, His Holiness Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Awa III visited the Church of the Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God in Yasenevo, where he was warmly welcomed by its rector Archimandrite Melchisedek (Artyukhin). On the same day the Primate of the Assyrian Church of the East left for Erbil.

During the visit, His Holiness was accompanied, from the Russian Orthodox side, by Bishop Kliment of Krasnoslobodsk and Temnikovsk, Co-Chairman of the Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East; Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), Secretary of the DECR for Inter-Christian Relations and Secretary of the Commission for Dialogue; S. G. Alferov, an employee of the DECR Secretariat for Inter-Christian Relations and a member of the Commission for Dialogue.

The delegation accompanying His Holiness included: His Eminence Mar Afram Athneil, Metropolitan of Syria; His Grace Mar Narsai Benyamen, Bishop of Iran, Armenia, and Georgia; Rev. Chorbishop Samano Odisho, Parish Priest of Mart Mariam Church in Moscow and member of the Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Assyrian Church of the East; Rev. Fr. Peter Pavlov, Parish Priest of Krasnodar; Rev. Fr. Ephraim Alkhas, Parish Priest of Rostov-on-Don and member of the Dialogue Commission, Rev. Dn. Roland Begamov, member of the Dialogue Commission.

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