Metropolitan Anthony speaks at the session of the Synod of the Church of India.



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On 23rd February at the invitation of the Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, the chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate the metropolitan of Volokolamsk Anthony, in his capacity as guest of honour, attended the session of the Holy Synod of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, which was held in the Synodal Hall of the residence of the Malankara Catholicos in Kottayam.

In his greetings to metropolitan Anthony, His Holiness the Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III noted the high level of developing bilateral relations between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Church of India and conveyed his warm good wishes to His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

Kirill.

On behalf of the Synod metropolitan Anthony was also greeted by the chairman of the Department for External Relations of the Malankara Church the metropolitan of Delhi Dimitrios, who particularly with thanksgiving recalled the visit to Moscow in 2023 of a high delegation of the Malankara Church headed by its primate.

In turn metropolitan Anthony conveyed to the Catholicos and members of the Holy Synod words of good wishes from His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill and his congratulations on the occasion of the memorial date of the 1950th anniversary of the martyr's death of the holy apostle Thomas.

The metropolitan noted that the relationship between the two churches had deep historical roots. Bilateral ties were actively developed and enjoyed a particularly trust during the period of the ever-memorable metropolitan Paulos Mar Grigorios (Varghese) and metropolitan Nikodim (Rotov). As a result, the key events in the history of bilateral contacts were the mutual visits of the primates of both churches. In 1976 His Holiness the Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathew I visited the Russian Church for the first time, while a year late His Holiness Patriarch Pimen paid a return visit to India. In 2006 His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, then in his capacity as chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, paid a visit to Delhi, Chennai and Kottayam and venerated Christian holy sites there associated with Saint Thomas.

The chairman of the DECR noted that a key element of the mutual relationship between the respective churches has traditionally been cooperation in the academic sphere, which is to say Malankara students coming to Russia to study at theological schools there. A noticeable example of this student exchange was the fact that His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews III himself in the 1970s studied at the Leningrad Theological Academy, the rector of which at the time was the bishop of Vyborg Kirill, the present Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

Metropolitan Anthony warmly recalled his first visit to the Malankara Church in 2023 and expressed the hope that the participation of the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church in the festivities currently taking place in Kottayam would become a further step towards strengthening and developing inter-church relations.

During his visit to India metropolitan Anthony was accompanied by the secretary of the DECR for inter-Christian relations hieromonk Stephan (Igumnov) and the secretary of the chairman of the DECR deacon Nikolai Vasin.

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