



## **Primate of the Malankara Church of India is awarded the Russian Orthodox Church's Order of Glory and Honour**



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With the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', the Primate of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, was awarded the Order of Glory and Honour, 1<sup>st</sup> Class, in consideration of his contribution to the promotion of friendly relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church and on the occasion of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Church of India have long-standing relations that date back to the 19th century. The two Churches hold theological consultations, develop academic cooperation and work together at various international Christian platforms, making their substantial contribution to strengthening bonds of friendship and mutual understanding between the peoples of

Russia and India.

The bilateral relations between the two Churches received a new impetus in 2019 when, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' and His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Paulose II, a **working group was established for coordinating bilateral relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.**

His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III was born in India on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1949. From 1977 to 1979, as a young priest, he studied at the Leningrad Theological Academy. Upon his election to the Patriarchal Throne in October 2021, His Holiness continued to strengthen ties with the Russian Orthodox Church in various spheres, devoting his particular attention to promoting monastic contacts, cooperation in the theological, academic and media spheres, as well as in youth work, church art and hospital ministry. Thanks to His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, the Church of India has been expressing its firm support to the Russian Orthodox Church in recent years.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023, His Holiness Catholicos Mathews III undertook **an official visit to Russia**. His Holiness visited **Moscow** and **St Petersburg** and held a **meeting** and **negotiations** with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', which laid the foundation for further steady progress in the inter-church relations.

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