



## Meeting takes place between the heads of the Kazakhstan metropolitan district and a delegation from the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.



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On 23rd April a meeting was held in the throne room of the Saint Joseph Chernov Spiritual and Cultural Administrative Centre of the Kazakhstan metropolitan district between the metropolitan of Astana and Kazakhstan Alexander and a delegation from the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, headed by the apostolic nuncio to the Republic of Kazakhstan archbishop George Panamthundil.

The website of the metropolitan district of Kazakhstan reports that the meeting was also attended by the administrator of the Roman Catholic diocese of the Holy Trinity in Alma-Ata José Lois Mumbiela Sierra, the bishop of the diocese of Patanamtittha Samuel mar Irenaeus from the archdiocese of Trivandrum and diocesan clergy the rector of the pilgrim parish of Saint George in the village of Chandanappalli Father Babi Varegeze and Father John Vilaial, nun Daria Golukova of the apostolic nunciature, parishioners from the Church of Saint George, the bishop of Taldygorkan Claudian, the secretary of the metropolitan district of Kazakhstan O.N. Ovchinnikov, the dean of the parishes of Astana archimandrite Sergius (Karamyshev), the director of the secretariat of metropolitan Alexander hieromonk Prochorus (Yendovitsky), the director of the administrative secretariat of the head of the

metropolitan district Father Georgy Sidorov and the director of protocol under the metropolitan protodeacon Roman Golovin.

Metropolitan Alexander spoke to the guests of the celebration this year of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the diocese of Astana and Alma-Ata and preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the repose in the Lord of metropolitan Joseph (Chernov). The metropolitan informed those present of the creation in the southern capital of Kazakhstan of a house museum dedicated to Saint Joseph. "At present we have managed to restore the old building where the ever-memorable bishop lived and worked; we are pleased with the amount of items we have collected for future exhibitions," noted the head of the metropolitan district.

The primate of the Orthodox Church of Kazakhstan spoke to the members of the delegation about the charity aid which had been given by the diocesan service for social and ministry and charity and parish volunteers to those who had suffered from the recent floods. He also shared with the guests his impressions of his recent visit to the region of Kostanay, which also has had to endure the consequences of recent flooding.

During the discussion, which was held in a warm atmosphere, the sides expressed their satisfaction at the state of inter-Christian and inter-religious dialogue in Kazakhstan and looked upon the future development of this dialogue positively. Issues of implementing joint projects for the protection of traditional spiritual values and the assertion within society of such concepts as a strong family, the upbringing of children, the indissolvability of marriage and the value of human life from conception to death were also discussed.

As a gift to the city of Patanamtittha from the Orthodox Church of Kazakhstan metropolitan Alexander presented an icon of the Holy Martyr George the Victorious with a particle of his holy relics. Bishop Samuel mar Irenaeus accepted the gift of the icon with gratitude.

The administrator of the diocese of the city of Patanamtittha presented to the head of the Kazakhstan metropolitan district a carved image of the Holy Martyr George and a cross.

Earlier on 23rd April the members of the delegation of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church visited the Orthodox churches of the city. In particular, they visited the Holy Ascension Cathedral, which is a historical and architectural monument of Kazakhstan. With the blessing of the metropolitan of Astana and Kazakhstan Alexander, the sacristan of the cathedral and director of the public relations department of the metropolitan district archpriest Alexander Suvorov gave the guests a tour of the cathedral. Father Alexander spoke to the guests of the history of the construction of the cathedral, noting the unique character of the architecture and its historical role and significance in the spiritual life of the city. The priest paid particular attention to the details of the professional restoration of the church carried out between 2017 and 2020. He stated that all the work had been done under the control of the Kazakh ministry of culture and UNESCO with the help of high-ranking specialists from Kazakhstan, Russia, Serbia, Italy, Germany and France. Archpriest Alexander emphasized that the Holy Ascension Cathedral had been included in the list of one hundred national sacred holy sites of the Ruhani Zangyru presidential programme.

After the meeting with metropolitan Alexander in the spiritual and cultural administrative centre of the metropolitan district, the members of the delegation of the Syro-Malankara Church became acquainted with the life of the Iberian Saint Seraphim Convent in Alma-Ata. A tour was given by the deputy rector of the Alma-Ata theological seminary Father Ioann Livinsky. The guests visited the main church of the convent dedicated to the Holy Wisdom, which houses relics of the Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon, the martyrs Faith, Hope and Charity and Sophia, the blessed elder of Moscow Matrona of

Moscow, the martyr Agatha of Sicily, and many other saints of God. Father Ioann spoke to the pilgrims of the Church of the Holy Wisdom which houses the sarcophagus of metropolitan Joseph Chernov, venerated by the Orthodox people, and of how on the territory of the convent there was buried the first hierarch of the diocese of Turkestan the ever-memorable archbishop Sophonius (Sokolsky), a labourer for the faith and spiritual enlightener.

The guests also visited the seminary church of Saint Matrona of Moscow, the chapel of Saint Seraphim of Sarov, the grave chapel of the Resurrection of Christ and inspected the convent living quarters and household buildings.

After the excursion bishop George Panamthundil and bishop Samuel mar Irenaeus thanked metropolitan Alexander, archpriest Alexander Suvorov and Father Ioann Livinsky for their hospitality and the time they had devoted to them. The head of the metropolitan district presented the guests with souvenir gifts.

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