



Delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate meets with the Coptic Patriarch



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On May 30th, 2024, a delegation of monastics from the Russian Orthodox Church, led by Metropolitan Isidore of Smolensk and Dorogobuzh, visited the residence of the Coptic Patriarchs in Abbassia (Cairo, Egypt), where they met with His Holiness Patriarch Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

From the Moscow Patriarchate, the meeting was attended by: Bishop Anthony of Volgodonsk and Salsk; Archimandrite Philip (Ponamarchuk), abbot of the Nikolo-Shartomsky Monastery of the Shuya Diocese; Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), DECR Secretary for Inter-Christian Relations; Archpriest Alexei Mashkov, head of the parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in Egypt; Igumen Dionysius (Shlenov), abbot of the St. Andrew's Stavropegic Monastery in Moscow; Igumen Sergius (Kuksov), abbot of the David's Hermitage of the Podolsk Diocese; Igumen Daniel (Tsupikov), abbot of the Gorno-Nikolsky Monastery of the Bryansk Diocese; Igumen Nicholas (Zolotov), abbot of the Spaso-Preobrazhensky Avraamiev Monastery of the Smolensk Diocese; Hieromonk Melchizedek (Skripkin), monk of the St. John the Theologian Monastery of the Ryazan Diocese; Hieromonk Mark (Akhmathanov), staff member of the Department for External Church Relations; Priest Lev Garin, assistant to Metropolitan Isidore of Smolensk and Dorogobuzh; and Abbess Agnia (Sudarikova), head of the Holy Trinity Belopesotsky Monastery of the Podolsk Diocese.

The Coptic side also invited G.E. Borisenko, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Arab Republic of Egypt, who was accompanied by M.Y. Kovalyuk, Secretary

of the Russian Embassy.

From the Coptic Church, the meeting was attended by: Metropolitan Daniel, Chairman of the Patriarchal Commission for Monasteries and Monasticism; Bishop Severius, abbot of the Monastery of St. Thomas and the Monastery of St. Victor in Khatatba; Hieromonk Cyril Anba Bishoy, Head of the Personal Secretariat of the Coptic Patriarch; Hieromonk Daud el-Antoni, representative of the Coptic Church in Russia; Dr. A. Milad, advisor to His Holiness Patriarch Tawadros; and B. Soliman, Head of the Patriarchal Department for Church Projects Implementation.

The Primate of the Coptic Church warmly welcomed the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church. His Holiness recalled his visits to Russia in 2014 and 2017 and the meetings held with the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church: "Please convey my warmest greetings to my beloved brother, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, and gratitude for his love for our Church and his special attention to the development of our bilateral relations, which grow year by year." Patriarch Tawadros also noted the care of the Russian Orthodox Church for Copts living in Russia, particularly for students of Russian universities.

In turn, Metropolitan Isidore conveyed greetings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' to the Primate of the Coptic Church, who pays special attention to the development of friendly inter-church relations. "It is a great honor for us to be guests of the Coptic Church, one of the oldest in the Christian world, and to visit the Egyptian land — the cradle of monasticism," noted the Metropolitan. According to him, mutual visits by representatives of Russian and Egyptian monasticism, carried out within the framework of the Commission for Inter-Church Dialogue, are an important and integral part of bilateral relations.

Addressing His Holiness Patriarch Tawadros, Ambassador G.E. Borisenko stated that the high level of interaction between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Coptic Church contributes to strengthening the historical ties between Russia and Egypt.

Bishop Anthony of Volgodonsk and Salsk highlighted the significance of the martyrdom heritage of both Churches and the importance of exchanging experiences in various spheres of church life.

Hieromonk Stefan conveyed greetings from Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, to the Primate of the Coptic Church and thanked His Holiness for his personal support of all projects related to the development of bilateral cooperation.

In conclusion, the Primate of the Coptic Church wished the Russian delegation a blessed pilgrimage to the holy places of the Egyptian land.

On the same day, guests visited the Cathedral of St. Mark the Apostle, where they venerated his relics and the relics of St. Athanasius of Alexandria. They also visited the Cathedral of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, honoring the memory of the new martyrs of the Coptic Church who suffered there in 2016 and have now been canonized.

The delegation then visited the women's monastery of the Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates (Amir Tadros) in Cairo, where they were hospitably received by Abbess Edroses and the sisters. The pilgrims venerated the spring on the monastery grounds, once revealed through the prayers of St. Onuphrius the Great, the myrrh-streaming icon of the Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates, the relics of the Great Martyr Marina, and other carefully preserved relics in the monastery.

In the evening, the guests from Russia arrived in the Nitrian Desert, where their pilgrimage will

continue.

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