



## Delegation of the Coptic Church arrives in Russia



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On August 23<sup>rd</sup>, at the invitation of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' and with the blessing of His Holiness Coptic Patriarch Tawadros II, a delegation of monks, clergymen and laypeople from Egypt arrived in Russia on a pilgrimage visit.

The trip is aimed at promoting dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Church within the framework of the two Churches' Bilateral Commission. Mutual visits of representatives of the Russian and the Egyptian monastic communities are part of the program which is being implemented over the last eight years.

The Coptic delegation includes Metropolitan Pola of the Diocese of Tanta; Bishop Ekladios, abbot of St. Bakhomious Monastery in Luxor; Hieromonk Yakobos Anba Bishoy and Hieromonk Bakhomious Anba

Bishoy from St. Bishoy Monastery in the Nitrian Desert; Priests Philopater Nabeh and Kyrillos Makkah, clerics of the Diocese of Cairo; and staff members of the Coptic Patriarchate – Dr Sinout Beshay, Mr Hany Soliman, Mrs Hoda Sobhy and Mrs Amal Ibrahim.

At the Domodedovo Airport, the guests were met by Metropolitan Arseny of Zvenigorod, vicar of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', administrator of the North-East Vicariate of the city of Moscow Diocese; Hegumen Sergy (Kuksov), abbot of the Holy Ascension and St. David Pustyn (Monastery); Hieromonk Dawoud el-Anthony, representative of the Coptic Church in Russia; Priest Sergy Bychkov, acting head of the Secretariat of the Moscow Diocese North-East Vicariate; Dr. Anton Milad, advisor to the Coptic Patriarch; and DECR staff members Deacon Alexander Cherepenin and Mr Daniil Arakelyan.

That same day, the Coptic Church delegates visited the Holy Ascension and St. David Pustyn. Hegumen Sergy (Kuksov) told the guests about the past and the present-day life of the monastery, its social and humanitarian work, and answered their questions about the brethren's monastic life. The guests laid flowers to a monument to soldiers of the Russian special operations forces located near the monastery. To commemorate the delegates' visit to the Holy Ascension and St. David Monastery, Hegumen Sergy presented them with memorable gifts.

During their pilgrimage trip, the Coptic Church representatives will visit various holy sites in the Kaluga and Smolensk regions, as well as in Moscow and the Moscow region.

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