



## Delegation of the Coptic Church visits Smolensk Metropolia



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On 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> August 2024, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', a delegation of the Coptic Church hierarchs, abbots and monks visited holy sites of the Smolensk Metropolia of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The delegation members arrived in Smolensk in the evening of 25<sup>th</sup> August. There, they were met by Metropolitan Isidor of Smolensk and Dorogobuzh, who gave dinner in honour of the guests.

In the morning of 26<sup>th</sup> August, the Coptic Church representatives visited the Holy Dormition Cathedral in Smolensk. They were greeted there by Metropolitan Isidor and local clerics. The delegation members venerated the miracle-working Smolensk Icon of the Mother of God and other local shrines. After that,

they went on a tour of Smolensk, having visited three old churches dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century – the Churches of St. John the Theologian, Saints Peter and Paul, and Archangel Michael.

In the afternoon, Metropolitan Isidor of Smolensk and Dorogobuzh received the guests at the Smolensk Diocesan Administration. He told them about the present-day life of the diocese and shared his reminiscences about his **visit to Egypt** as the head of the monastic delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church in May – June 2024. The Coptic Church representatives thanked Metropolitan Isidor for the warm welcome and hospitality and shared their impressions of their visit to Russia.

Later that day, the delegation members, accompanied by Metropolitan Isidor, arrived at the Holy Trinity Monastery in Boldino – the largest monastery in the Smolensk land. The monastery's revival in the 1990s – 2000s happened thanks to the efforts of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', back then Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad. The guests venerated the holy relics of the monastery's founder – St. Gerasimus of Boldino – and met with its abbot, Archimandrite Antony (Mezentsov), and brethren.

On their visit to the Smolensk Metropolia, the Coptic delegates were accompanied by Metropolitan Arseny of Zvenigorod, administrator of the North-East Vicariate of the City of Moscow Diocese; Hegumen Sergy (Kuksov), abbot of the Holy Ascension and St. David Pustyn; Priest Lev Garin, assistant to the administrator of the Smolensk Diocese; Priest Nikolai Davydov, deputy dean of the Smolensk City Deanery; and Mr Daniil Arakelyan, staff member of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations.

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