



Delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church meets with the Ethiopian Patriarch



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On September 24, a meeting took place at the Patriarchal residence of the Ethiopian Church in Addis Ababa between His Holiness Abune Mathias I, Patriarch of Ethiopia, and members of the Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Church, which held its session in Ethiopia from September 23 to 25.

The Russian Orthodox Church was represented by Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), Secretary of the DECR for Inter-Christian Relations and Secretary of the Commission; Abbess Elizabeth (Pozdnyakova) of the Martha and Mary Convent of Mercy; V.V. Kipshidze, Deputy Chair of the Synodal Department for Church's Relations with Society and Mass Media; and D.E. Arakelyan, a DECR staff member.

From the Ethiopian side, the meeting included: Archbishop Abuna Abraham, Managing Director of the Ethiopian Church; Archbishop Abune Phillipos, Rector of the Holy Trinity Theological University in Addis Ababa and Co-Chair of the Commission; and Priest Elias Abrha, Deputy Managing Director of the Ethiopian Church.

Welcoming the delegation from the Russian Orthodox Church, His Holiness Abuna Mathias conveyed brotherly greetings to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', noting that their meeting in Moscow in May 2018 had elevated the interaction between the two Churches to its current high level. One manifestation of this is the work of the Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Church. His Holiness Abuna Mathias emphasized the "historic nature of the friendly relations between our Churches and peoples," expressing satisfaction with their current development.

Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov) conveyed greetings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' and Metropolitan Antony, Chairman of the DECR, thanking the delegation for their hospitality and personal attention to issues of bilateral dialogue.

Both sides emphasized the shared commitment of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian Church to protect Christian moral values and the importance of jointly supporting Christians in regions where they face persecution.

Members of the Russian Orthodox Church delegation spoke about the difficult situation of Orthodox believers in Ukraine, including the context of the law banning the activities of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Patriarch Abuna Mathias expressed solidarity with the persecuted Ukrainian Orthodox brothers and sisters and reaffirmed the Ethiopian Church's unwavering support for the Russian Orthodox Church.

Furthermore, Archbishop Abune Philipos and Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov) discussed issues related to the work of the Commission for bilateral dialogue.

Abbess Elizabeth (Pozdnyakova) highlighted the "importance of developing monastic exchanges," which could yield fruitful results due to the "closeness of the ascetic traditions of our Churches."

V.V. Kipshidze, Deputy Chair of the Synodal Department for Church's Relations with Society and Mass Media, spoke about proposed joint church projects in the media sphere aimed at amplifying the voice of traditional Christian Churches in the world.

At the conclusion of the meeting, participants gave interviews to Ethiopian church and secular media.

