



## Primate of Malankara Church of India receives Order of Glory and Honour, 1st Class



### DECR Communication Service, 02/11/2024

On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, handed over the Order of Glory and Honour, 1<sup>st</sup> Class, to His Holiness Catholicos Basellos Marthoma Mathews III. The high award **had been presented** to the Primate of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in consideration of his contribution to promoting friendly relations between the Malankara Church and the Russian Orthodox Church and on the occasion of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The award ceremony took place after the divine service celebrated by His Holiness Catholicos Basellos Marthoma Mathews III at the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Parumala, State of Kerala, on the commemoration day of St. Gregorios of Parumala, widely venerated in India.

Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk greeted the Primate of the Malankara Church on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', having pointed out that His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews III has a special affinity with the Russian Orthodox Church, which dates back to the 1970s when the future head of the Malankara Church studied at the Leningrad Theological Academy. As Metropolitan Anthony also noted, His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews III in his capacity as Primate of the ancient Church of India founded by Apostle Thomas devotes a lot of effort to strengthen inter-church ties and speaks up in defence of the persecuted Christians, having expressed support for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church on repeated occasions.

The Primate of the Malankara Church conveyed his heartfelt gratitude to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill for the high award and recalled with warmth his **visit to Russia** in September 2023. There is great potential for further progress in friendly and trust-based relations between the two Churches, His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews III also noted.

Among those who attended the ceremony was the Metropolitan of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church, Theodosius Mar Thoma XXII, as well as hierarchs, clergy and laity of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

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Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/92441/>