



Working Group for Coordinating Bilateral Relations between Russian and Malankara Churches holds its 4th meeting



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On 18th – 19th July 2025, with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' and His Holiness Catholicoi Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, the Working Group for Coordinating Bilateral Relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church held its 4th meeting at the Moscow Theological Academy.

Representing the Moscow Patriarchate were Bishop Kirill of Sergiyev Posad and Dmitrov, Working Group co-chairman; Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), secretary for inter-Christian relations of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, Working Group secretary; Hieromonk Mark (Akhmatkhanov), staff member of the DECR Secretariat for Inter-Christian Relations; and Mr Maxim Kalinin, senior lecturer at the Institute for Oriental and Classical Studies of the HSE University.

The Malankara Church's delegation included Metropolitan Zachariah Mar Nicholovos of the Northeast American Diocese, Working Group co-chairman; Metropolitan Abraham Mar Stephanos of the Diocese of UK-Europe and Africa; and Priest Aswin Fernandis, executive director of the Department of Ecumenical Relations of the Malankara Church.

Taking part in the meeting was also Metropolitan Youhanon Mar Demetrios of the Delhi Diocese, president of the Department of Ecumenical Relations of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

Since the Working Group's previous meeting in the UAE in August 2024, the following bilateral initiatives were implemented: on 1st November 2024, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' and His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Marthoma Mathews III had **a telephone conversation**; on 8th March 2025, the Primate of the Russian Church **received a delegation of the Malankara Church**; in November 2024, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, visited India, where he took part in the celebrations marking the commemoration day of St. Gregorios of Parumala and presented to the Primate of the Malankara Church the Order of Glory and Honour, 1st Class; in March 2025, Metropolitan Youhanon Mar Demetrios of the Delhi Diocese, president of the Department of Ecumenical Relations of the Malankara Church, and Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Yulios of the Kunnampulam Diocese visited Russia and took part in the celebrations on the commemoration day of the Blessed Matrona of Moscow; in October 2024, the Catholicos and hierarchs of the Malankara Church sent letters of support following the seizure of the Archangel Michael Cathedral of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Cherkasy; bishops of the Malankara Church met with the faculty and students of the Moscow Theological Academy and the Smolensk Theological Seminary; the Russian Church's representatives were among the participants in the Malankara Church's academic conferences on the First Ecumenical Council and the autonomy of the Indian Church; two Malankara students completed their studies at the St. Petersburg Theological Academy as part of the student exchange programme; a monastic delegation of the Malankara Church visited Russia; representatives of the Malankara Church took part in the DECR's international conference on pastoral care for people with mental diseases, as well as in a medical conference organized by the St. Alexis Hospital; negotiations took place between representatives of the Malankara Church and the Synodal Department for Church's Relations with Society and Mass Media; concerts of the Russian spiritual music were held in India; the two Churches carried on rendering each other assistance in providing places of worship to their believers as part of the cooperation in the diaspora; the work continued in translating the lives of the two Churches' saints; theological consultations were initiated.

The participants in the meeting discussed further cooperation in various spheres and adopted a joint communique.

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