THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

Delegation of monks and nuns from the Moscow Patriarchate completes pilgrimage to Egypt.



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Fr om 23rd to 30th April, with the blessing of His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill and at the invitation of His Holiness the Coptic Patriarch Tawadros III, a delegation of monks and nuns of the Russian Orthodox Church headed by the metropolitan of Saransk and Mordovia visited Egypt.

Making up the delegation were: the metropolitan of Donetsk and Mariupol Vladimir, auxiliary bishop of the North Donetsk diocese; the bishop of Pavlov-Posad Siluanus; abbess Juliania, mother superior of the Convent of the Holy Conception in Moscow; hieromonk Stephan (Igumnov), secretary of the DECR for inter-Christian relations; abbot Boris (Tulupov), father superior pf the Saint Nicholas monastery in Nikolo-Malitsa in Tver diocese; abbess Victorina (Perminova), mother superior of the Nativity of Our Lady convent in Moscow; abbess Barbara (Ivanova), mother superior of the Saint Nicholas of the

Klobuk convent in Tver diocese; archpriest Sergei Shutalov of the Donetsk metropolitanate; Father Dimitry Artyemkin, senior lecturer at the department of theology at the Moscow Theological Academy; Father Andrei Titushkin fr om the DECR; deacon Sergei Panteleyev, lecturer at the department of theology at the Moscow Theological Academy; inmates of the Holy Conception Convent in Moscow nun Sergia (Gazaryan) and nun Joannicia (Zhdanova); nun Sergia (Inyutina), inmate of the Nativity of Our Lady convent in Moscow; representative of the Donetsk diocese nun Zosima (Khomyakova) and nun Alipia (Khorsun). Also participating in the visit were A. I. Andronov, subdeacon to the metropolitan of Saransk and Mordovia Zenobius; representatives of the DECR I. A. Nikolaev and S. V. Mikhailov.

Acting on the Egyptian side in organizing the visit were the representative of the Coptic Church in Russia hieromonk Daoud el-Antoni, advisor to the Coptic Patriarch doctor Anton Milad and colleagues fr om the Patriarchal commission for monasteries and the monastic life.

On 24th and 25th April the delegation visited the ancient monasteries of the Desert of the East near the Red Sea.

On 24th April the pilgrims arrived at the monastery of Saint Paul of Thebes wh ere they venerated the tomb of the great ascetic. The metropolitan of Saransk and Mordovia Zenobius, assisted by the clergy members of the delegation, celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the church of the caves dating back to the fifth century, wh ere at one time one of the holy inmates of the monastery accomplished great spiritual feats.

The delegation was warmly welcomed by the father superior of the monastery, the chairman of the Patriarchal commission for monasteries and the monastic life of the Coptic Church bishop Daniel. Metropolitan Zenobius expressed his gratitude to bishop Daniel for his heartfelt hospitality and the opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist in one of the oldest monasteries in Christendom. In turn, bishop Daniel greeted the guests on behalf on the hierarch of the Coptic Church, expressed his joy at meeting with representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate and shared his reminiscences of his numerous visits to Russia. The bishop, in particular, spoke of his visit, which took place fr om 26th January to 3rd February 2026, to Moscow as head of the Coptic monastic delegation to participate in the XXIV International Nativity Readings, festivities on the occasion of the seventeenth anniversary of the enthronement of His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Kirill and the first celebration by the Russian Orthodox Church of the venerable fathers and founders of monasticism and all the saints who have shone forth in the land of Egypt.

On 25th April the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate visited the other ancient monastery of the Desert of the East, which is to say, the monastery of Saint Anthony the Great. The members of the delegation ascended the mountain and visited the cave of Saint Anthony, wh ere they held a short

prayer service to him. At the foot of the mountain the guests viewed the new Church of the Cross and Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the same day the representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church set off for Cairo. Along the way, the delegation made a stop at the Cathedral of the Nativity of Our Lord in the new administrative capital of Egypt. This cathedral of one of the largest church buildings in the whole of Christendom. The festive opening and consecration of the cathedral complex as held on 6th January 2019 with the Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in attendance.

Upon arriving in Cairo, the pilgrims visited the Coptic Convent of the Holy Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates (Amir Tadros) in the old quarter of the city. Here they were warmly greeted by the mother superior abbess Edrosis and the sisters.

On 26th April on the Sunday of the Holy Myrrh-bearing Women, the metropolitan of Saransk and Mordovia Zenobius headed the Divine Liturgy in the domestic Church of Saint Sergius of Radonezh. Concelebrating with the metropolitan were the members of the delegation in the rank of bishop, the bishop of Lukhovitsy Euthemius, auxiliary bishop of the Patriarchal exarchate for Africa and cleric of the Egyptian deanery Father Dimitry Gurov.

The delegation also on the same day visited the historical Christian centre of Cairo, including the renowned great holy site of the Hanging Church of the Holy Virgin Mary, the *Mu ‘allaqa*.

Among the other places the delegation visited were the Church of the Holy Martyr Barbara, the Convent of Saint George the Victorious (Mar Girgis), wh ere they were greeted the mother superior Thecla and the sisters, and the Church of the Holy Mother of God in Maadi.

On 27th April, as they continued their stay in Cairo, the pilgrims fr om Russia visited the Coptic Cathedral of Saint Mark and the Cathedral of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. They also visited the Convent of the Holy Martyr Mercurius of Caesarea (Abu-Sayfein), wh ere they conversed with the inmate abbess Kyria and the sisters.

The delegation arrived on the same day in Nitrian Desert between Cairo and Alexandria, which is considered to be the homeland of Christian monasticism.

The first stop the delegation made in the Nitrian Desert was the Monastery of Saint Macarius the Great. The delegation also had the chance to converse with the brethren of the monastery.

On 28th April the pilgrims fr om Russia celebrated the Divine Liturgy in one of the churches of the

Monastery of Saint Macarius the Great. Then the delegation visited the monastery in the Nitrian Desert of Saint Paisius the Great (Anba Bisha). The representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church conversed with the father superior of the monastery of Paisius the Great bishop Agathy and the brethren.

Then the delegation visited the Monastery of the Syrians or the Syrian Fathers (as-Surian), founded at the end of the fourth century by the disciples of Paisius the Great on the site wh ere his far cell was located. The members of the delegation conversed with the brethren and inmates of the monastery, who today number more than two hundred.

On the same day the Russian pilgrims visited the Monastery of the Romans (al-Baramus), founded around 335 AD by Saint Macarius the Great.

On 29th April the delegation visited two other monasteries located in the eastern region of the Nitrian Desert, which is to say, the Monastery of the Holy Martyr Thomas and the Monastery of the Holy Martyr Victor. The representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate were greeted by the father superior of both monasteries bishop Severius with the brethren entrusted to his pastoral care.

On 30th April the delegation set off on their return journey to Russia.

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