Moscow Patriarchate Hierarchs Meet with Primate of Coptic Church



DECR Communication Service, 19/06/2026

On 16th June 2026, at the Patriarchal residence in El Abbassia, Cairo, His Holiness Patriarch Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox Church met with the Moscow Patriarchate hierarchs who were visiting Egypt with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus'. The delegation included Metropolitan Isidor of Smolensk and Dorogobuzh, Co-Chairman of the Commission for Dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Coptic Orthodox Church; Metropolitan Matfey of Pskov and Porkhov, Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Commission for Promoting Pilgrimage and Bringing Shrines; and Bishop Antony of Volgodonsk and Salsk, member of the Commission on Church Governance, Pastoral Ministry and Organization of Church Life of the Inter-Council Presence of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The delegation also included Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), Secretary for Inter-Christian Relations of

the Department for External Church Relations; Priest Vasily Kovalchuk, Secretary of the Commission for Promoting Pilgrimage and Bringing Shrines; Priest Lev Garin, Assistant to the Administrator of the Smolensk Diocese, Dean of Smolensk; Hieromonk Mitrofan (Soldatenko) of the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius Lavra; Hegumenness Mikhaila (Solodukhina), Abbess of the Convent of the Intercession of Most Holy Theotokos and St. Alexander of Chagra, Head of the Working Group for Promoting Domestic and International Pilgrimage of the Commission for Promoting Pilgrimage and Bringing Shrines.

Representing the Coptic Church at the meeting were also Ms Barbara Soliman, Director of the Office for Church Projects of the Coptic Patriarchate, and Dr Anton Milad, Advisor to the Coptic Patriarch.

Metropolitan Isidor of Smolensk and Dorogobuzh conveyed to His Holiness Patriarch Tawadros II greetings and warm wishes from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' and noted that it was his first visit to Cairo in his capacity as Co-Chairman of the Bilateral Commission for Dialogue, which had celebrated its 10th anniversary the year before. Metropolitan Isidor thanked His Holiness Patriarch Tawadros for personally endorsing the projects aimed at promoting the two Churches' cooperation.

The Primate of the Coptic Church asked the delegates to convey his heartfelt greetings to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' and shared with those present warm memories of his visits to Russia in **2014** and **2017**. His Holiness Patriarch Tawadros commended the work done by the Commission for Dialogue, especially in promoting monastic contacts and mutual knowledge of the two Churches' spiritual traditions.

As Metropolitan Isidor pointed out, one of the milestone moments at the present-day stage of the bilateral relations was the **establishment by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church** of the commemoration day of the Synaxis of the Venerable Fathers and All the Saints Who Shone Forth in the Egyptian Land, which is celebrated on the 1st of February according to the Gregorian calendar. On that day in 2026, the Zachatyevsky Stavropegic Convent in Moscow hosted a section on Egypt's Monastic Heritage and Its Relevance for Modern-Day Russian Monasticism within the framework of the 34th International Christmas Educational Readings. Taking part in it was a **Coptic delegation** led by Bishop Danial, Head of the Patriarchal Committee on Monasticism and Monasteries and Abbot of the Monastery of St. Paul of Thebes. The delegation also attended celebrations that marked the 17th anniversary of the enthronement of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus'.

The participants in the meeting emphasized the importance of mutual assistance in organizing parishes for offering pastoral guidance to compatriots in Egypt and Russia, as well as of facilitating contacts between theological schools and student exchange.

Metropolitan Isidor expressed gratitude to the Coptic Patriarchate for its firm stance in supporting the canonical unity of the Russian Orthodox Church.

His Holiness Patriarch Tawadros II stressed the necessity to further strengthen relations between the Orthodox and the Oriental Churches for giving a joint response to today's dangerous spiritual challenges.

His Holiness also emphasized the importance of concerted efforts in tackling current social and humanitarian problems and the benefit of continuing theological dialogue.

The Primate of the Coptic Church cited the Holy Apostle Paul who wrote: The love of Christ constraineth us (2 Cor 5:14), emphasizing that love is what constitutes the foundation for Christian witness and unity among Churches.

Metropolitan Matfey of Pskov and Porkhov told the Coptic Patriarch about the Russian Orthodox Church's pilgrimage programmes and projects aimed at bringing shrines for church veneration. Bishop Antony of Volgodonsk and Salsk dwelt on the issues of parish life, youth work and Sunday schools.

The participants in the meeting discussed a number of specific projects pertaining to the two Churches' bilateral relations.

At the conclusion of the meeting, on instruction from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', Metropolitan Isidor of Smolensk and Dorogobuzh presented to Ms Barbara Soliman, Secretary to His Holiness Patriarch Tawadros II and Director of the Office for Church Projects of the Coptic Patriarchate, an award of the Russian Orthodox Church – Order of the Holy Princess Olga, Equal-to-the-Apostles, 2nd Class – in consideration of her contribution of many years to the development of inter-church relations.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/94387/