Coptic Church delegation makes pilgrimage to Russia



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Fr om 21 to 29 October 2026, at the invitation of His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus', and with the blessing of His Holiness Tawadros II, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St Mark, a delegation of Egyptian monastics visited Russia on a pilgrimage. The delegation was headed by Metropolitan Youannes of Asyut, Secretary-General of the Holy Synod of the Coptic Church.

At the Intercession Stavropegic Convent, which served as the delegation's residence during its stay in the Russian capital, Metropolitan Youannes of Asyut and those accompanying him were warmly welcomed by the sisters of the monastery.

On 22 October, the pilgrims fr om Egypt visited the Martha and Mary Convent of Mercy, wh ere they were warmly received by the sisters, headed by the abbess, Mother Superior Elisabeth (Pozdnyakova). The Coptic monastics were given a guided tour of the convent. The abbess also held a conversation with the guests over a meal.

At the Conception Stavropegic Convent, accompanied by its abbess, Mother Superior Juliana (Kaleda), representatives of the Coptic Church visited the Cathedral of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, the Church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit and the Church of the Conception of Righteous Anna. They venerated the monastery's revered holy objects: a particle of the Precious and Life-Giving

Cross of the Lord, the "Merciful" Icon of the Mother of God, and the shrine of the monastery's founders, Venerable Juliana and Eupraxia, whose relics rest beneath the floor of the church.

A festive reception was held in the refectory building of the Conception Convent. On the sidelines of the reception, Metropolitan Youannes and members of the delegation met with Metropolitan Eugene of Yekaterinburg and Verkhoturye, Chairman of the Synodal Department for Religious Education and Catechesis.

On 23–24 October, the Coptic Church delegation visited the Holy Trinity Lavra of St Sergius and the Yaroslavl Metropolis.

On the morning of 23 October, representatives of Egyptian monasticism visited the Monastery of St Sergius and the Moscow Theological Academy, wh ere they were welcomed by Archimandrite Simeon (Tomachinsky), Associate Professor at the Academy and Head of the Kinovia Educational Centre. The pilgrims prayed at the shrine containing the relics of St Sergius of Radonezh, who is venerated in the Coptic and other Oriental Orthodox Churches, and venerated the holy objects in the Serapion Chamber and the Nikon Chapel.

On the same day, the Coptic Church delegation visited the town of Pereslavl-Zalessky. At the Holy Trinity Danilov Monastery, the guests fr om Egypt were welcomed by its abbot, Igumen Panteleimon (Korolyov); Mother Superior Eustolia (Afonina), Abbess of the St Nicholas Convent; and Mother Superior Daniila (Severinenko), Abbess of the Feodorovsky Convent.

In the evening, the delegation arrived at the Vvedensky Tolga Convent in Yaroslavl. At the holy gates of the monastery, the guests fr om the Coptic Church were welcomed by the abbess, Mother Superior Varvara (Tretyak), and the sisters. The pilgrims venerated the holy objects preserved at this historic monastery: the Tolga Icon of the Mother of God and the relics of St Ignatius (Brianchaninov). His writings have become widely known in the Coptic Church over the past several decades and are now studied in its theological schools.

On 24 October, the representatives of the Egyptian Church met with Metropolitan Vadim of Yaroslavl and Rostov. The head of the Yaroslavl Metropolis expressed his great joy at welcoming representatives of one of the most ancient monastic traditions. Metropolitan Vadim spoke about the history and present-day life of the parishes and monasteries of the Yaroslavl and Rostov region, as well as the saints who had laboured there, including those who had suffered martyrdom or confessed their faith during the persecutions carried out by the atheistic authorities in the last century. A solemn reception was held in honour of the guests on behalf of the head of the Metropolis.

On the same day, the delegation visited the Dormition Cathedral in Yaroslavl and the Yaroslavl Theological Seminary. During a meeting with the seminary's Rector, Hieromonk Platon (Kudlasevich), faculty members and students, the guests spoke about the history of Egyptian monasteries, wh ere Christian monasticism first emerged; the liturgical life and monastic obediences of their inhabitants; and Coptic educational institutions, which today train not only future clergy but also specialists in various fields to serve the Church.

In Rostov the Great, the pilgrims fr om Egypt visited the ancient city Kremlin and the Dormition Cathedral located within its grounds, wh ere they prayed at the tombs containing the relics of St Leontius and St Theodore of Rostov. Bell-ringing masters demonstrated various traditional Rostov bell-ringing patterns to the guests.

The Egyptian monastics' stay in the Yaroslavl and Rostov region concluded with a visit to the Spaso-Yakovlevsky Dimitriev Monastery. Accompanied by the abbot, Igumen Sergius (Gubin), Metropolitan Youannes of Asyut and the delegation members venerated the venerable relics of St Demetrius of Rostov, who compiled the Chetii-Minei (Lives of the Saints), a hagiographical work also known among Egyptian Christians.

On 25 October, at the Novospassky Stavropegic Monastery in Moscow, the Secretary-General of the Holy Synod of the Coptic Church and those accompanying him met with Metropolitan Gregory of Voskresensk, the monastery's abbot, Managing Director of the Moscow Patriarchate, and First Vicar of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'. Metropolitan Gregory welcomed the guests on behalf of the Primate and the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church and spoke about various current issues in the life of the Church in Russia and other countries within the canonical responsibility of the Moscow Patriarchate. The delegation venerated the wonderworking "The All-Tsaritsa" Icon of the Mother of God and other holy objects of the Novospassky Monastery, and visited its principal churches.

On 27 October, the delegation members visited the Church Complex of the Resurrection of Christ and the New Martyrs and Confessors of the Russian Church in Butovo, built at the site wh ere large-scale executions of clergy, monastics and laypeople took place in 1937–1938. The Rector, Archpriest Kirill Kaleda, gave the guests a guided tour of the churches and the "Garden of Remembrance" memorial.

On the same day, representatives of the Coptic Church visited the Epiphany Cathedral in Yelokhovo, Moscow, where they were warmly welcomed by its Rector, Archbishop Thomas of Odintsovo and Krasnogorsk, Head of the Administrative Secretariat of the Moscow Patriarchate.

On 28 October, the delegation visited the Resurrection New Jerusalem Stavropegic Monastery. On behalf of its abbot, Archimandrite Theophylact (Bezukladnikov), the guests were welcomed by

Hieromonk Agafangel (Kobylenko), the monastery's sacristan.

The representatives of the Coptic Church then visited the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Kubinka, the main church of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. The visit to this site of Russia's military glory included an introduction to the "Road of Memory" museum complex, including exhibitions dedicated to the 85th anniversary of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, and a visit to Patriot Park. The Egyptian monastics venerated the cathedral's principal icon, the Image of the Saviour Not Made by Hands, presented to the church by Russian President V.V. Putin.

In Moscow, the representatives of Egyptian monasticism also visited the Donskoy Stavropegic Monastery, where they met with its abbot, Metropolitan Theognost of Kashira, Chairman of the Synodal Department for Monasteries and Monasticism. They also visited Red Square, the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour and the grounds of the historic VDNKh exhibition complex.

The Coptic Church delegation that visited Russia included Metropolitan Elijah of Khartoum and South Sudan; Metropolitan Serapion of Omdurman and Port Sudan; Bishop Apollos of South Sinai; Hieromonk Daoud el-Antony, Representative of the Coptic Church in Russia; Hieromonk Matthew el-Makari, a monk of the Monastery of St Macarius the Great in the Nitrian Desert; Priest John Atef of the Diocese of South Sinai; Dr Anton Milad, Advisor to the Coptic Patriarch; members of the Coptic Patriarchate's staff, Deacon Wafik Michael, Deacon Safwat Youssef, Nun Shere Samir, Nun Kiria Abdel-Samih, Nun Vasilia Gali, A. Milad, I. Sharkawi, M. Attalla and R. Abdel-Malek; and Deacon Stephen Nader, Representative of the Diocese of Khartoum.

During the visit, Metropolitan Youannes of Asyut and the delegation members were accompanied by Metropolitan Arseny of Zvenigorod, Vicar of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus'; Bishop Roman of Serpukhov, Vicar of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and Abbot of the Vysotsky Stavropegic Monastery; Mother Superior Juliana (Kaleda), Deputy Chairman of the Synodal Department for Monasteries and Monasticism and Abbess of the Conception Stavropegic Convent; Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), Secretary for Inter-Christian Affairs of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate; Mother Superior Elisabeth (Pozdnyakova), Abbess of the Martha and Mary Convent of Mercy in Moscow; DECR staff members S.G. Alferov and D.E. Arakelyan; and representatives of the Synodal Department for Monasteries and Monasticism.

Photos by the Synodal Department for Monasteries and Monasticism and the Press Service of the Yaroslavl Metropolis

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