



Synod points to importance of promoting projects as part of dialogue with Malankara Church



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During its meeting on 12th March 2024, the Holy Synod heard a report by Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, on the activities of the Working Group for Coordinating Bilateral Relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

The Working Group, set up in compliance with a decision of the Holy Synod of 29th October 2019, held its first meeting in **Kottayam** on 3rd – 7th February 2020, and the second one in **Moscow** on 24th – 27th April 2023.

The Working Group successfully promotes student exchange, which has become an important aspect of the bilateral dialogue; develops cooperation in the media sphere, in youth and social ministry, as well as contacts between medical institutions of the two Churches; and helps representatives of the Malankara Church to gain a deeper insight into the monastic traditions of the Russian Orthodox Church. More and more Indian Christians learn about and revere Russian saints, such as, for example, Sergius of Radonezh, Seraphim of Sarov and Blessed Matrona of Moscow. The Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Church act in concert with each other at various inter-Christian forums, working together to uphold traditional values and protect Christians who are suffering from persecutions in different regions of the world.

In September 2023, the Primate of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, His Holiness Baselios Marthoma Mathews III, **visited Russia**. On 6th September, he **met with His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus'**. The two Primates noted that the bilateral relations between their Churches had reached a high level of cooperation.

From 22nd to 26th February 2024, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, **visited** the Malankara Church to meet with its **Primate**, senior representatives of the Department of Ecumenical Relations and members of the Working Group. The Malankara side suggested, while developing the current joint projects, to include theological consultations in the dialogue's agenda.

The members of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church pointed to the importance of promoting the current joint projects and including bilateral theological consultations in its agenda within the framework of the activities of the Working Group for Coordinating Bilateral Relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

The Synod also approved a new list of members of the Working Group representing the Russian Orthodox Church. It includes:

- a) Bishop Kirill of Sergiyev Posad and Dmitrov, abbot the Holy Trinity and St. Sergius Lavra, rector of the Moscow Theological Academy – co-chairman;
- b) Hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov), DECR Secretary for Inter-Christian Relations – secretary;
- c) Hieromonk Pyotr (Akhmatkhanov), staff member of the Department for External Church Relations;
- d) Mr Maksim Kalinin, senior lecturer at the Institute for Oriental and Classical Studies of the HSE University.

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