

THE PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA MEETS WITH PRESIDENT PUTIN AND CONCLUSION OF HIS VISIT TO MOSCOW

On 22nd November 2016, His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, as part of his visit to the Russian capital for the celebrations of the 70th birthday of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, visited the Exarchate of the Alexandria Church in Moscow, accompanied by His Eminence Meletios, Metropolitan of Carthage and the Reverend Fr. Athenodoros Papaevripiades, Patriarchal Exarch in Cyprus.

His Beatitude was met at the entrance of the Exarchate by His Eminence Athanasios Metropolitan of Cyrene together with clergy who minister at the Holy All Saints Church at the Exarchate and a multitude of faithful who worship there daily or voluntarily assist in its activities.

The Alexandrian Primate was briefed about the restoration project of the Church, blessed the new buildings of the Exarchate which include offices and other areas and had the opportunity of speaking to the faithful who reverently waited to receive his blessing, regarding the Missionary efforts of the Patriarchate.

He also thanked the Metropolitan of Cyrene for the welcome, underscoring the important role of the three Exarchates of the Patriarchate which are developing in Greece, in Moscow and most recently in Cyprus and whose aim is to contribute to the efforts of the Alexandrian Church.

On the same day, His Beatitude gave an interview to three Russian world class television channels, among them the well-known channel SOYOUZ, and had the opportunity of briefing them

on the religious situation in Africa and the impact of Islamic fundamentalism on the Patriarchate, the fraternal relations of the two Churches of Alexandria and Moscow, his support of the Russian Church on the Ukrainian issue, the topics discussed at the recent Great Synod in Crete, and also the charismatic personality of the celebrating Patriarch Kirill and his assistance to Mission and the Ancient Patriarchate of Alexandria.

His Beatitude also paid a visit as a humble pilgrim to the Monastery of the Holy Protection, where the sacred Relics of the wonderworker Venerable Matrona the Blind are kept, prayed before her holy shrine and confessed the wonderworking power of the Saint to those who call on her in prayer.

Note that hundreds of faithful waited patiently in line to venerate, despite the daily sub-zero temperatures. In conclusion, in the evening, His Beatitude the Patriarch together with the other Primates attended a musical event in the amphitheatre of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, in honour of Patriarch Kirill, which was also attended by His Excellency the **President of Russia, Mr. Vladimir Putin**, who also had a discussion with His Beatitude; note also that following all the important contacts he made during his days in the Russian capital with influential political and financial figures of the country, **he received the assurance that in the new year the flights from Russia to Egypt will resume so that tourism can recover in the Land of the Nile, from which thousands of Egyptian workers will have economic benefits.**