

COMPLETION OF THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION FOR THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH AND WORLD LUTHERAN FEDERATION

On the afternoon of 30th May 2024 the deliberations of the 3rd Meeting of the 18th Plenary of the International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the International Lutheran Federation were successfully completed at the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of ST George Old Cairo.

During the closing of the deliberations, Their Eminences the Co-Chairmen of the aforementioned Commission, Metropolitan Kyrillos of Krini, Professor of the University of Athens and Lutheran Bishop Johann Schneider, read the messages of the His All- Holiness Bartholomaios, the Ecumenical Patriarch and Dr. Anne Burghardt, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation to the Orthodox and Lutheran participants, Hierarchs, Priests and lay Theologians. Grateful thanks were also expressed to His Beatitude Theodoro, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and ALL Africa for the excellent preparation and conduct of the deliberations of the 3rd Meeting of the 18th Plenary of the Committee in Cairo, as well as for the Abrahamic hospitality for its members.

His Eminence Metropolitan Panteleimon, Chief Secretary of the Holy and Sacred Synod, conveyed, on behalf of His Beatitude the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, heartfelt Resurrection wishes, the satisfaction and joyous feelings of the venerable Primate of the Second Throne Church, which took care of this important inter-Christian Meeting, citing:

“Glorifying the Lord, the Risen Founder of the Church, the Supreme Patriarchate of Alexandria and His Beatitude Theodoros II our Pope and Patriarch, who with paternal love and fraternal spirit accepted and blessed the supplication request of the present International Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Lutheran World Federation, on hosting the deliberations of the 3rd Meeting of its 18th Plenary at the Patriarchal See, from May 25th to 30th, with particular joy bids farewell to the Honorable Co-Presidents and its honorable members.

Your deliberations were carried out at the See of the Alexandrian Church with its two thousand-year Apostolic legacy, its eventful history and hopeful future, and in fact in the premises of this cherished monastic habitat. The choice of this blessed place by His Holiness, as the place of your meeting, was not accidental. This remarkable Monastery, whose history is lost in the depths of the centuries, lies at the crossroads of East and West, at a meeting place of cultures and religions.

In the present times, where damnable divisions, temporary expediencies and bloody conflicts, especially in the wider region of the Middle East, in Ukraine, in parts of Africa and elsewhere, are bleeding our turbulent world, but also the church body, which thirsts for peace, unity and love, the fact now recorded in history of the peaceful, fruitful and therefore blessed dialogue between us, in this very God-walked place, where our Lord as an infant persecuted by the bloodthirsty Herod and as an immigrant found a place of safe hospitality, is a brilliant example of reconciliation dialogue , coexistence and cooperation. This is how hope is strengthened for a future with more mutual understanding, humility and solidarity, certainly without diminishing our unblemished faith, but with a willingness to grant more space to our “neighbour”.

From the peaceful land of Egypt, our Blessed Primate, Pope Theodoros II, addresses the Resurrection greeting to His Holiness Bartholomaios, the Ecumenical Patriarch, to the Blessed Orthodox Primates, to the members of the World Lutheran Federation and to all Christians under heaven .

With firm faith in the Arch-Shepherd Christ, the Supreme Church of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark unceasingly and perpetually continues its journey into the future, as the unsinkable Ark of Salvation for all, without distinction, of the peoples of the African continent, her own children, in favor of the illumination and advancement of whom she toiled and continues without complaint to toil and will always take care of them, discussing without fear, with cultures, traditions and beliefs, despite the present difficult circumstances and wickedness. Having successfully sailed the salty seas of heresies and having steeled Her self-awareness on the edge of the pagan sword of martyrdom, she is not afraid of shadowy Cyclops and contemporary frosty Laistrygonians, she will remain the untarnished Lighthouse of the Apostolic and Patriarchal heritage, under the light of which every person of good will will encounter the unadulterated Gospel truth. Glory to God for everything”.

Representatives of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Patriarchate of Alexandria, the Patriarchate of Antioch, the Patriarchate of Serbia, the Patriarchate of Georgia, as well as the Autocephalous Churches of Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Albania and the Czech Republic – Slovakia participated in the deliberation of the International Joint Commission of Theological Dialogue with the World Lutheran Federation.

It is also noted that during the days of the deliberations of the International Commission, its members were taken on tours by the Very Reverend Abbot Archimandrite Damaskinos Alazrai, to the Museum, the Roman Tower, the Chapels of the Holy Patriarchal Monastery of St George, the tombs of the New Martyrs Gabriel and Kyrmidolis and to the tombs of the Patriarchs, where His Eminence Metropolitan Gregorios of Peristeri served a memorial service.

They also visited the so-called Coptic “Hanging Church”, where they were received by the Chief Secretary of the Coptic Bishop of Old Cairo.

***From the Chief Secretariat
of the Patriarchate of Alexandria***