

CONVENING OF THE JOINT THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE COMMISSION BETWEEN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH AND THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION AT THE SEE OF THE PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA

With the blessing of His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, the Second Throne Patriarchate is hosting the meeting of the International Commission of Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Lutheran World Federation. In this important meeting, which will last from 24th to 31st May this year, 14 Orthodox and 10 Lutheran representatives, clergy and lay theologians, are participating.

The event acquires special significance, since it is being convened with the paternal wishes and Patriarchal blessings of His Beatitude Pope and Patriarch Theodoros II in the historic Patriarchal See of the Alexandrian Church, in the land of the Nile, cradle of Christianity and creator of Theology through the exalted pioneers and pillars of the right faith, the Great Fathers and Holy Archbishops of Alexandria, through the famous Catechetical School of the Great City, as well as through the vast deserts that gave birth to anchoritism, asceticism and definitively shaped monasticism under heaven and its canons.

It is noted that the official bilateral Dialogue between the Orthodox and Lutherans began about 40 years ago following the initiative and invitation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the Lutheran World Federation, with the first joint meeting in 1981 in Espoo, Finland (August 27 – September 4, 1981). The aim of the Commission's work, as it stated in its first joint communiqué, is: "Dialogue with the ultimate goal of complete communion... A fact which exceeds human expectations when one studies the experiences of previous centuries". More than 17 meetings followed in various European and Mediterranean cities, where issues of Ecclesiology, Divine Eucharist and Sacraments, among others, were studied and discussed.

Since the year 2019, the Commission has been concerned with the subject of Spirituality, "Holy Spirit, Church and World", which after the Plenary of 2023 in the city of the Reformation, in Wittenberg, Germany, will be concluded at the Meeting in Cairo. The Declarations-Texts issued at these meetings formed a foundation and point of reference for the ongoing global meeting and dialogue between the two Christian families. The activity of the Holy Spirit during creation, its presence and activity inside and outside of the Church, its emanation and its place during divine worship, the Invocation and liturgical prayer are aspects of the joint Declaration being prepared, especially in view of the anniversary of the completion of 1700 years since the convening of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea (325). After completing the theme of the Holy Spirit, the Commission will move on to the question of Synodality.

The official opening ceremony of the deliberations of the international Joint Theological Commission will take place tomorrow, May 24, 2024, at the Church of the God-walked Patriarchal Monastery of St George in Old Cairo.

***From the Chief Secretariat of the Holy and Sacred Synod
of the Patriarchate of Alexandria***