

Translated from the Russian

No 04/2214

11 December 2017

Ms. Maria Laura PIO

Dear Ms. Pio,

On behalf of Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations, I thank you for your letter in which you express concern over the visit to Russia this September of the ecumenical group from Lebanon.

It was a rather large group that consisted of some 40 people, among whom were the Orthodox and Catholic hierarchs. The major aim of the meeting, which causes your concern, with the members of that group at the Department for External Church Relations was to express solidarity with the suffering Christians of the Middle East. No separate meeting with Mrs. Ryden, whom you mention, was planned.

Please accept my wishes of good health and God's help in your work.

Yours faithfully,

**+Archimandrite Philaret
Vice-Chairman
Department for External Church Relations
Moscow Patriarchate**