

Today, President Abdel Fattah El Sisi received Pope Francis, the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, at the Ittihadia Palace where an official reception was held.

President El Sisi held a session of bilateral talks with Pope Francis that later expanded to include delegations from both countries. The President welcomed Pope Francis and expressed his appreciation for the Pope and his international positions that are based on spiritual and humanitarian values and principles. The President lauded the Pope's keenness on making this important visit happen, which conveys a number of deep messages when the world is experiencing a critical time. The President valued the meeting he previously had with Pope Francis at the Vatican in November 2014 that allowed him to know the Pope closer. The President expressed appreciation for the Pope's support and prayers for Egypt.

Pope Francis expressed his happiness to visit Egypt and referred to its valuable contribution to the history of humanity and its keenness on realizing peace. The Pope affirmed the important role Egypt plays in the Middle East and valued its efforts to reach settlements to pressing and complicated regional issues that have caused a great humanitarian plight. The Pope noted his support to Egypt's efforts to stop violence and terrorism, in addition to realizing development. The Pope lauded Egypt's efforts to realize prosperity and peace.

The meeting touched on ways to enhance various aspects of relations between Egypt and the Vatican, in light of commemorating the 70th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations with which the Pope's visit coincides.

President El Sisi reviewed a number of national issues. He noted that the Egyptian people are courageously enduring burdens resulting from the fight against extremism and terrorism and affirmed that Egypt will always be ready to undertake its role as a model for moderate Islam, given its history and civilization. The President emphasized that Christian Egyptians are an integral part of the Egyptian national fabric and that the State treats all Egyptians on the basis of citizenship and constitutional and legal rights. This is in addition to reinforcing equality and national belonging, which has immunized Egypt with a strong social fabric against the forces of extremism and darkness.