



## **Synod of Bishops of Russian Church Abroad holds its regular session in San Francisco**

On 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> June 2019, in the Archbishop Anthony (Medvedev) Memorial Library at the headquarters of the Western American Diocese in San Francisco, the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Church Abroad held its regular session timed to the commemoration day and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of canonization of St. John the Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco and Miracle-Worker. In the past the building was used as St Tikhon of Zadonsk Orphanage. It housed a chapel in honour of this saint and the cell-residence of St John (Maximovich), the great archpastor of the Russian diaspora.

Participating in the session of the Synod of Bishops, chaired by Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York, First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, were Archbishop Mark of Berlin and Germany, Archbishop Kyrill of San Francisco and Western America, Bishop Irenei of Richmond and Western Europe, Bishop Theodosius of Seattle and Bishop Nicholas of Manhattan.

The members of the Synod heard a report by Bishop Nicholas of Manhattan on the repose, funeral and

burial of Archbishop Alypy (Gamanovich) of the blessed memory, long-time Ruling Bishop of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America, who had died on Holy Pascha, and prayed for the repose of his soul.

A report on the activities of the Fund for Assistance of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia was presented. The Synod of Bishops invoked God's blessing upon the members of the organization and thanked its Board of Directors and dedicated volunteers for rendering necessary assistance and support to the clergy, church institutions, missions, parishes and monasteries of the Russian Church Abroad.

Archbishop Mark of Berlin and Germany reported on the activities of the Ecclesiastical Mission of the Russian Church Abroad in Jerusalem, and told about the recent de-mining of a plot of land, belonging to the ROCOR on the Jordan River, where the need now arises to draw people who wish to lead an ascetic life at this holy site. The Mission hopes that after all the necessary repair works are done, divine services will be celebrated there again, attracting pilgrims.

The Synod members heard a report by Bishop Irenei of Richmond and Western Europe and decided to unite the dioceses of Great Britain and Western Europe under the omophorion of the ruling hierarch with the title "Bishop of London and Western Europe." In view of his departure to that diocese, Bishop Irenei was relieved of his oversight of the St Silouan-Mt Athos Monastery in Sonoma, CA, and appointed Hegumen James (Corazza) as its head, elevating him to the rank of archimandrite.

Having heard a report by Archbishop Gabriel of Montreal and Canada on the activities of the Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, NY, and its seminary, the Synod decreed: "To confirm Nicolas Schidlovsky as Dean of the main theological school of the Russian Church Abroad, elected by the Board of Directors of Holy Trinity Seminary."

With the blessing of Archbishop Peter of Chicago and Mid-America, Archpriest Serafim Gan informed the members of the Synod of Bishops of the work of the organizing committee preparing celebrations that will mark the centenary of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. The archpastors blessed the concept of having a jubilee icon painted, and approved the text of the announcement of the icon-painting competition, calling upon ruling bishops to organize celebrations in their dioceses next year and to dedicate youth and music conferences, diocesan assemblies, clergy retreats, symposia and other church events to the anniversary. Bishop Nicholas presented a project of memorial panagias and pectoral crosses to be made for the year 2020. In view of the forthcoming jubilee the Synod of Bishops also decided to convene a Council of Bishops, appointing as members of the pre-Council committee: Archbishop Gabriel, Chairman; Bishop Irenei; Bishop Theodosius and Bishop Nicholas, Secretary. The Council of Bishops will convene at St Elizabeth Convent in Buchendorf, Germany, on 10<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> June

2020.

The Synod members also discussed candidates for the episcopacy, as well as various administrative and financial matters and ecclesiastical awards for clergy and laity in each diocese.

The session concluded with the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of canonization of St. John of Shanghai. On 28<sup>th</sup> June the archpastors celebrated the All-Night Vigil and on the following day the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of the “Joy of All Who Sorrow” Icon of the Mother of God.

*Website of the Russian Church Abroad/*

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