# Archbishop Justinian of Naro-Fominsk leads celebrations in Fort Ross – the first Russian settlement in California

On 28 July 2012, Fort Ross celebrated Living History Day dedicated to the 200th anniversary of the first Russian settlement in California.

Archbishop Justinian of Naro-Fominsk, administrator of the Patriarchal parishes in the USA, and Bishop Nikolai of Salavat and Kumertau, head of the group of pilgrims from Bashkiria, celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Trinity chapel in Fort Ross.

Attending the festivities were H.E. Sergei Kislyak, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the USA; Consul General to San Francisco Vladimir Vinokurov, special presidential representative for international cultural cooperation and special envoy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mikhail Shvydkoy, and another officials.

Praying at the Liturgy were many pilgrims, including hegumeness Ioanna (Smolkina) of the Tabyn convent of the Ufa diocese and the sisters. Moleben to the Holy Prince Vladimir, Equal-to-the-Apostles, was celebrated after the Liturgy.

After the Divine service, Archbishop Justinian warmly greeted Bishop Nikolai and all those who have come to the celebration. Bishop Nikolai presented Archbishop Justinian with a Kazan-Tabyn Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God as a token of concelebration.

The archpastors blessed new bells for Fort Ross donated by the residents of the city of Totma, where Ivan Kuskov, who founded the first Russian settlement in America, was born.

At the old cemetery nearby the Trinity chapel, Archbishop Justinian, clergymen and laymen commemorated the founders, builders and all those who had lived and worked at Fort Ross.

On July 27, Archbishop Justinian of Naro-Fominsk, attended official reception given at the Russian Consulate General in San Francisco on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Fort Ross.

Attending the reception were also H.E. Sergei Kislyak, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the USA; Consul General to San Francisco Vladimir Vinokurov, special

presidential representative for international cultural cooperation and special envoy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mikhail Shvydkoy, other officials, and representatives of cultural and public organizations of Russia and the USA, website of the Representation of the Russian Orthodox Church in the USA reports.

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