



**THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

Department for External Church Relations

## **Metropolitan Nikodim of Kharkov and Bogodukhov passed away in the Lord**

Metropolitan Nikodim of Kharkov and Bogodukhov, the oldest hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, 91, passed away in the Lord in the evening of September 15, 2011, in the Monastery of the Protecting Veil in Kharkov, the Patriarchal Press Service has reported.

Condolences over his death were expressed by Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich. 'With my heart I share the bitter pain of the irreplaceable loss and your grief', he stated in his message to His Beatitude Vladimir, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine.

Metropolitan Nikodim of Kharkov and Bogodukhov (his secular name Nikolay S. Rusnak) was born on April 18, 1921, at the village of Davidovtsy, near Chernovtsy, to a peasant family.

Since 1938 he was a novice at the Kreschatik Monastery of St. John the Theologian.

On January 6, 1945, he took monastic vows. On April 29, he was ordained as hierodeacon, and on February 23, 1946, as hieromonk.

From 1950 to 1955 he was abbot of the Kreschatik Monastery of St. John the Theologian.

In 1958 he graduated from the Moscow Theological Academy with the degree of Candidate of Theology.

Since April 23, 1958, he was a member of the Russian Orthodox Mission in Jerusalem. On November 15, 1958, he was elevated to the rank of archimandrite and appointed as head of the Mission.

On August 10, 1961, he was consecrated as Bishop of Kostroma and Galich.

Since April 21, 1964, he was Bishop of Argentina and South America. On February 25, 1968, he was elevated to the rank of archbishop and appointed as Exarch for Central and South America.

Since December 1, 1970, he was Archbishop of Kharkov and Bogodukhov, acting Exarch for Central and South America (till 1977).

Since November 23, 1983 he was Archbishop of Lvov and Ternopol, acting administrator of the diocese of Kharkov. On March 28, 1984, he was relieved of his duties as acting administrator of the diocese of Kharkov.

Since December 27, 1988, he was Metropolitan of Lvov and Drohobych, and since September 13, 1989, Metropolitan of Kharkov and Bogodukhov.

From April to March 1992, by the decree of His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia, he acted as Primate of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church until the election of Metropolitan Vladimir (Sabodan).

Since June 1992 he was permanent member of the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

On the occasion of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in May 2011, the celebrations in Kharkov were led by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

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