



## **Svetlana Medvedeva visits main church of Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia in West Coast of United States**

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On June 23, the commemoration day of St. Ioann of Tobolsk, the Russian President's wife Svetlana Medvedeva, who accompanies her husband on his first official visit to California, visited the Cathedral of Our Lady the Joy to All the Afflicted in San Francisco.

This cathedral is the religious center of the Russian Orthodox diaspora in the USA's West Coast and the only Russian parish church in North America to conduct the full circle of divine services every day. From 1963 to 1966, its rector's service was carried out by Archbishop John of Shanghai and San Francisco, now glorified by the Russian Church. He is one of the most venerated saints of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and his relics rest at the cathedral. In 2006, this cathedral hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> All-Diaspora Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, which adopted the historic decision to put an end to the division in the Russian Local Church.

Russia's first lady was welcomed by Archbishop Kyrill of San Francisco and Western America and the cathedral's parishioners. During the thanksgiving to St. John (Maximovich), the Miracle Worker of Shanghai and San Francisco, a prayer was said at his relics for the Russian State, President Dimitry, Svetlana and for the clergy and faithful of the Russian Church'. After the prayer service and 'Many Years', Archbishop Kyrill blessed Svetlana Medvedeva with an icon of St. John and introduced to her the clergy and officers of the parish. Ms. Medvedeva presented the parish with an icon of Sts Peter and Fevronia, patrons of family and marriage.

The ecclesiarch of the cathedral, Archpriest Peter Perekrestov, told Ms. Medvedeva about the history of the parish and its significance for the Russian diaspora, and about the cathedral's two schools. He showed her the main shrines of the cathedral including the sash of St. John of Kronstadt, the Bible, icon and hoods which belonged to the Imperial family; the medallion with a particle from the Ipatyev's house's wall stained with the blood of the royal martyrs, and the Gospel of the 17<sup>th</sup> century published under Czar Mikhail Feodorovich.

In conclusion of her pilgrim's visit, Ms. Medvedeva met with the clergy and parishioners to express

gratitude to all those who have preserved the Russian Orthodox faith and culture in a difficult situation of emigration and wished them love, friendship and mutual help.

*Photos by Loik Nikola*

*Communication service DECR MP*

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