



THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

A regular session of the Synod of Bishops of ROCOR is held in New York



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On December 8-9, 2021, under the auspices of the Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God 'of the Sign' and presided over by His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, the first in-person session of the Synod of Bishops since December 2019 was held in New York City. Taking part in the meeting of the Synod were His Eminence Metropolitan Mark of Berlin and Germany; His Eminence Archbishop Kyrill of San Francisco and Western America, Secretary of the Synod of Bishops; His Eminence Archbishop Gabriel of Montreal and Canada; His Grace Bishop Irenei of London and Western Europe; and His Grace

Bishop Nicholas of Manhattan.

On Tuesday evening, December 7, after the Divine Services in St Sergius Chapel on the ground floor of the Synodal Residence, Bishop Nicholas, Deputy Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, hosted a reception in honour of the First Hierarch and visiting archpastors.

Metropolitan Hilarion opened the assembly the next morning, congratulating the hierarchs on the 100th anniversary of the 1st All-Diaspora Council, held in Sremski Karlovci, Yugoslavia, in November 1921. Metropolitan Hilarion expressed his pleasure at the possibility of the first in-person session of the Synod since the beginning of the pandemic.

Having approved the agenda, the Synod members heard a report by Archimandrite Roman (Krassovsky), Head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem of the Russian Church Abroad, on matters relating to the ROCOR's monasteries in the Holy Land; on the recent feast-day celebrations at St Alexander Nevsky Podvorie at the 'Russian Excavations' in Jerusalem; and on renovation work being carried out at the Orthodox school in Bethany. Concluding his report, Archimandrite Roman proposed that the archpastors encourage their clergymen to go to the Holy Land for retreats, to lead pilgrimages to the holy sites, and to conduct Divine Services there and support the monastics.

Bishop Irenei of London and Western Europe, Synodal Secretary for Inter-Orthodox Relations, then spoke on events in the Orthodox world. During his extensive report, the uncanonical actions of Metropolitan Jean of Dubna, who has illegitimately claimed to have received a number of clergymen of the Russian Church Abroad without their canonical release, were considered; and the decisions of the Ecclesiastical Court of the Diocese of Great Britain and Western Europe regarding these clergymen were also reviewed. His Grace then spoke of his recent visit to the Archangel Michael Parish in Cannes, France, which is under the rectorship of Priest Antony Odaysky, who was awarded the gold pectoral cross by the Synod of Bishops. Bishop Irenei expressed hope that this large and active parish will soon return to its church building, following a court ruling in Grasse in November, confirming that the Archangel Michael Church belongs to Russia.

Archpriest Andrei Sommer, Vice President of the Synodal Youth Department, then spoke on youth ministry, after which the Synod blessed the convening of a gathering of youth from the parishes in North America, to take place in Salt Lake City, Utah. The gatherings will be held at St George Church on June 13-19, 2022.

The Synod of Bishops also deliberated on various matters of Church administration and discipline, and heard the intercessions of the Synod members for ecclesiastical awards for their clerics and laity.

The gathering concluded with the festal Divine Services in the Synodal Cathedral of Our Lady 'of the Sign', on the occasion of its Altar Feast of the Kursk-root icon, during which the members of the Holy Synod consecrated the Right Reverend Archimandrite Job (Bandmann) as Bishop of Stuttgart, Vicar of the German Dicoese. Throughout the festal services, the Synodal choir, under the direction of Vadim Gan, sang liturgical music composed by musicians of the Russian Church Abroad.

On Saturday, 11 December, the newly-consecrated Bishop Job celebrated his first hierarchical Divine Liturgy at the cathedral.

The next sessions of the Synod of Bishops will convene on 22 February, 2022.

Source: <https://mospat.ru/en/news/88645/>