



Remains of Archbishop Theophan (Bystrov), confessor of the Imperial Family, are returned to Russia



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The remains of Archbishop Theophan (Bystrov, 1874-1940) of Poltava and Pereslavl, confessor of the Family of the Royal Passion-bearers, will be reburied in St. Petersburg.

In 2016, the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia responded to a letter of the head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administration for Institutions Abroad, Bishop Anthony of Bogorodsk, (now Metropolitan of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Department for External Church Relations and head of the same administration), and agreed upon the request of Archbishop Theophan's relatives and followers to transfer his remains from the municipal cemetery in Limeroy to St. Petersburg, Patriarchia.ru reports.

According to the website of the Diocese of Chersonesus, a process of the reburial of the remains of

Archbishop Theophan of Poltava and Pereslavl began on July 21, 2022. The remains were unearthed at the municipal cemetery in Limeray, the Loire Valley, France, on July 21, 2022. The requiem service was conducted by Archbishop Nestor of Madrid and Lisbon, temporary administrator of the Diocese of Chersonesus. Attending the service were the mayor of the city, clergymen and admirers of Archbishop Theophan who arrived in France on this occasion.

That same day, Archbishop Theophan's remains started on their way to St. Petersburg. They will be laid to rest at the Volkov cemetery in the northern capital. On July 23, the coffin was met at the Pulkovo airport by representatives of the 'Lestvitsa' Orthodox centre and the Archbishop's distant relatives.

The website of the St. Petersburg Metropolis informs that the car with the coffin was met at the Alexander Nevsky Lavra by Orthodox Christians. The coffin was taken to the crypt of the Holy Trinity Cathedral where it will stay till July 28. The requiem litiya was conducted by hieromonk Alexy (Stepanov) of the Lavra.

The future Archbishop Theophan of Poltava and Pereslavl (secular name Vasily Dmitrievich Bystrov) was born into a family of a village priest in the village of Podmoshie, St. Petersburg diocese, on December 31, 1873. He studied at the theological school of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra and graduated from the St. Petersburg theological seminary and academy.

In 1898, he was tonsured with name Theophan. In the same year, he was ordained deacon and then hieromonk. In 1901, he was raised to the rank of archimandrite with the duties of acting inspector of the Academy.

In 1905, he was confirmed as inspector and offered the post of confessor to the Royal Family. In February 1909, archimandrite Theophan was appointed rector of the St. Petersburg Theological Academy and consecrated bishop at the Holy Trinity Cathedral of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra.

In 1910, he was transferred to the see of Tauris and in 1912 to Astrakhan because of misunderstanding between him and the members of the Royal Family about assessment of Grigory Rasputin. In 1913, he was transferred from Astrakhan to Poltava.

In 1917, as a diocesan bishop he was sent as a delegate to the Local Council. In 1918, he was elevated to the rank of archbishop.

Archbishop Theophan supported the election of Pyotr Wrangel as commander-in-chief of the Armed

Forces of the South of Russia. In November 1920, Archbishop Theophan emigrated to Constantinople together with other hierarchs of the South of Russia. In 1921, he was appointed abbot of the Petkovica monastery in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. He was a member of the 1st Russian All-Emigration Council and vice-president of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR). In 1925, he served at St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia. In 1926, he broke communion with the ROCOR because of the different interpretation of the dogma of redemption.

In 1931, he moved to France and settled in a small village near Amboise on the Loire, and later in Limeray in the same region where he was leading the life of a real hermit. Archbishop Theophan reposed on February 6/19 1940 and was buried in the municipal cemetery of Limeray.

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