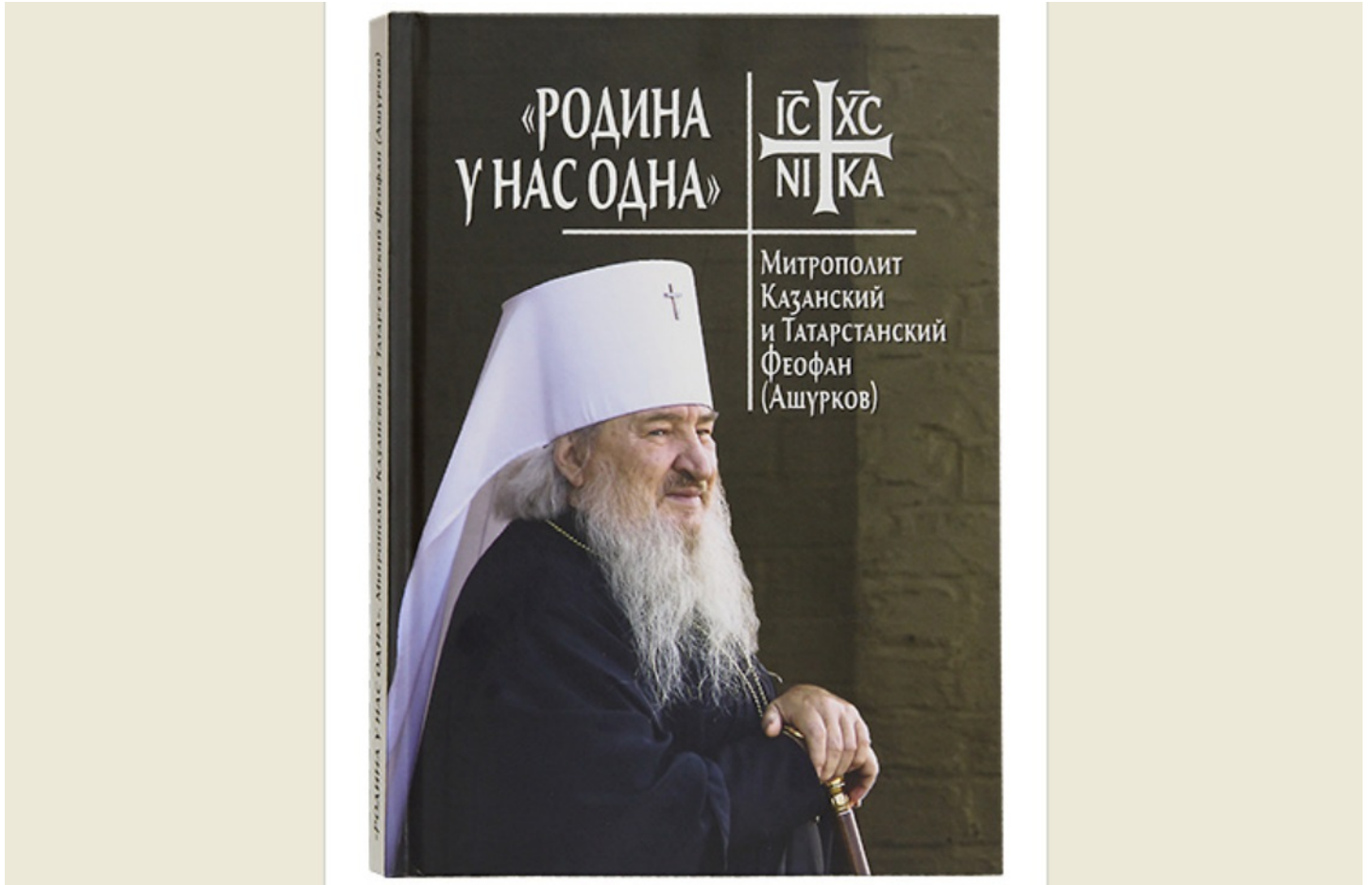




A book dedicated to Metropolitan Theophan (Ashurkov) was published by the Publishing House of the Moscow Patriarchate



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The Publishing House of the Moscow Patriarchate has published a book entitled "We Have One Homeland: Metropolitan Theophan (Ashurkov) of Kazan and Tatarstan". The author-compiler of the book is V.L. Beresnev.

The book contains Vladyka Theophan's memories of his life, beginning with his childhood in Kursk region and ending with the years of service in the Caucasus and Tatarstan. It also includes selected sermons of the archpastor, his travel notes from many journeys around the world and memories of people who knew the Metropolitan closely either through his ministry in the Russian Orthodox Church or through his activities in the government and diplomatic fields.

Metropolitan Theophan (Ashurkov) worked extensively in the field of external Church relations at various times. In 1977 by the decree of the Holy Synod, he - then still a hieromonk - was sent to the Russian Spiritual Mission in Jerusalem, where he held an obedience until 1982. In 1984, Hegumen Theophan was appointed secretary of the Exarchate of Central and South America. From 1987-1989, Archimandrite Theophan (Ashurkov) worked at the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, and then he was appointed Exarch of the Patriarchate of Moscow to the Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa. From 1993-1999, he served as a Deputy Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations. From December 28, 1999 to October 8, 2000 he was the representative of the Patriarch of Moscow to the Patriarch of Antioch and all the East.

The book opens with the following address to readers by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus':

«Dear brothers and sisters!

You are holding in your hands a book that speaks of the life and ministry of Metropolitan Theophan (Ashurkov) of Kazan and Tatarstan, a bright, talented and zealous archpastor who has done much work for the benefit of the Church, our country and our people.

Anyone who was acquainted with Bishop Theophan was invariably struck by the versatility of the gifts with which the Lord generously endowed him. Possessing excellent diplomatic qualities and great personal charm, courage and strong will, the ability to react quickly and act decisively in difficult circumstances, Metropolitan Theophan was able to find sometimes a non-standard way out of critical situations.

Interacting with people of different nationalities, religious and political convictions, Vladyka invariably preserved simplicity and openness in communication. This valuable quality and his desire to be all things to all people (cf. 1 Cor. 9:22) helped him to build up a constructive dialogue between the Church, the state, and society at every place of service to God and his neighbors.

His work in opening and organizing the activities of foreign institutions of the Russian Orthodox Church in various states deserves high praise.

In 1989-1993, holding the post of the Representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' to the Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, the then Archimandrite Theophan was able, in the extremely difficult conditions of political and economic instability in the region, to ensure the continuous functioning of the representation located in Alexandria. He worked closely with the initiators of the return of the

parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in Tunisia and Iran to the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate. Through the efforts of Archimandrite Theophan a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church was founded in the Republic of South Africa.

Archpastoral ministry in the Magadan and Chelyabinsk dioceses, in the North Caucasus, and in Tatarstan, where to a considerable degree his efforts led to the rebirth of the historic Kazan Cathedral on the site of the appearance of the miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, were important milestones in the life of Metropolitan Theophan.

The labors of Metropolitan Theophan, a kind archpastor who had in his heart a burning love of Christ and of the people, won him respect among many Orthodox hierarchs, statesmen and public figures, as well as among the simple laity, whom he was able to unite in the name of the Lord.

I hope that this publication will be a significant contribution to the preservation of the memory of this remarkable man, a bold preacher of the Gospel and a zealous servant of God».

The publication will be of interest to a wide audience of readers who are seeking spiritual perfection and are not indifferent to the fate of their homeland, reports the website of the Moscow Patriarchate Publishing House.

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