



## Russian Orthodox parish in Havana celebrates its 15th anniversary



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On 4<sup>th</sup> November 2023, the Church of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God in Havana, Cuba, celebrated its patronal feast and the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its consecration.

A decision <https://mospat.ru/ru/news/80293/> to build a Russian Orthodox church in Cuba came in response to numerous appeals from the local Russian-speaking community. It was taken during a meeting between the chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad (now Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus') and the leader of Cuba, Fidel Castro Ruz. It took 33 months to complete the construction works. In autumn of 2008, the

church was consecrated <https://mospat.ru/en/news/63134/> in honour of the Kazan Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. The church in Havana became a visible symbol of Russia-Cuba friendship and a distinctive landmark of the historical city centre. Over the past fifteen years, the parish has grown into a multi-ethnic community.

Among those who attended the Divine Liturgy on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2023 were parishioners of the Kazan Church, Cuban public officials, staff members of Russia's diplomatic corps in Cuba, Russian citizens residing in Cuba, and representatives of the local academic and student communities.

After the service, a photo exhibition was presented and a repast took place. It was followed by a meeting on the occasion of the church's anniversary and the National Unity Day celebrated in Russia on 4<sup>th</sup> November. Rev. Savva Gagloyev, the parish rector, gave an overview of the history of Orthodox Christianity in Cuba. The attendees watched fragments from the video made on the day of the consecration. Featured in the video was His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, back then Metropolitan of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, and Mr Eusebio Leal Spengler, City Historian of Havana. The guests were also shown a documentary in the Spanish language on the Moscow Church of St. Basil the Blessed.

The celebrations marking the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church and the National Unity Day of Russia were organized by the Rossotrudnichestvo Representative Office in Cuba in collaboration with the Kazan Parish in Havana.