



Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church consecrates the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral in the city of Tver.



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On 21st July on the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost and the feast day of the apparition of the Kazan icon of Our Lady, His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill paid a Primatial visit to the metropolitanate of Tver.

On the square before the restored Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Our Lord in the city of Tver to greet the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church were: the governor of the Tver region I.M. Rudenya; the metropolitan of Tver and Kashin Ambrosius; Father Sergei Budkov, the head of the administrative secretariat of the diocese of Tver and the sacristan of the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral of Tver. Lining the square were trainee soldiers from the Marshal Zhukov Military Academy and students of the Tver Suvorov Military School, reports the press service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

His Holiness then entered the cathedral and venerated the relics of the Right-Believing prince Michael of Tver.

Then His Holiness the Patriarch celebrated the office of the great consecration of the newly-restored cathedral of the Holy Transfiguration and then the Divine Liturgy in the newly-consecrated church.

At the Divine Liturgy there was held the consecration to the episcopate of archimandrite Savva (Lesnykh) as hierarch of the diocese of Armavir and Labinsk. The newly-consecrated bishop, elected to his office by the decision of the Holy Synod on 30th May 2024 (protocol no.48), became the ruling bishop of the diocese of Armavir in the metropolitanate of Kuban.

Concelebrating with His Holiness were: the metropolitan of Voskresensk Gregory, the chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; the metropolitan of Volokolamsk; the metropolitan of Volokolamsk Anthony, the chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate; the metropolitan of Tver and Kashin Ambrosius; the metropolitan of Yekaterinodar and Kuban Basil; the bishop of Rzhev and Toropets Adrian; the bishop of Bezhetsk and Udomlya Philaret; the bishop of Sochi and Tuapse Herman; the bishop of Tikhorets and Korenovsk Stephan; the bishop of Eisk and Timashevsk Paul; the bishop of Ramenskoye Alexei, the personal secretary of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill; archimandrite Boris (Tulupov), the secretary of the diocese of Tver, the dean of the episcopal metochions, monasteries, the head of the Saint Nicholas Monastery in Malitsa; archpriest Yevgeny Morkovin, the dean of the Kimry church district' chairman of the disciplinary commission of the diocese of Tver, the dean of the Cathedral of the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral in the city of Kimry; hieromonk Misail (Sarafanov), aide to the chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate; Father Sergei Budkov, the director of the administrative secretariat of the diocese of Tver and sacristan of the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral; and the clergy of the metropolitanate of Tver.

The Patriarchal service was attended by: the governor of the Tver region I.M. Rudenya; the head of the One Russia party in the Russian State Duma V.A. Vasiliev; Russian State Duma deputies S.A. Veremeyenko and Yu.V. Saranova; the chairman of the legislative assembly of the Tver region S.A. Golubev; and the deputy mayor of Moscow for city construction policy V.V. Yefimov.

Praying in the sanctuary of the cathedral was retired metropolitan Victor (Oleinik), who for thirty years from 1988 to 2018 was the ruling bishop of the diocese of Tver.

At the service were also praying: the mother superior of the Ascension Convent Or Orshino abbess Eupraxia (Inber); the mother superior of Saint Catherine's Convent in Tver abbess Juliania (Ritonemi); the mother superior of Saint Olga's Convent in Volgoverkhovie abbess Sophia (Proschaeva); the mother superior of the Holy Cross Convent in Tver abbess Larisa (Lobanova); the mother superior of the Kazan

icon of Our Lady Convent in Vyshny Volochok abbess Sophia (Sukhova); the mother superior of the Saint Nicholas Klobukov Convent in Kashin abbess Barbara (Ivanova); volunteer students from various institutes of Tver and the Tver region; representatives of the Orthodox youth of the diocese of Tver, teachers and students of the Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk Diocesan Secondary Orthodox School in Tver; the teachers and former pupils of the Saint Anna of Kashin Orthodox Kindergarten; and the students of the Sunday schools of the city's parishes, builders, benefactors and donors for the newly-consecrated Holy Transfiguration Cathedral.

To the left of the Holy Doors of the cathedral's iconostasis a thirteenth-century icon of the Mother of God called 'Loving-kindness', brought from the local history museum, had been installed a month earlier for the veneration of the faithful.

The service was broadcast live on the church TV channels Spas and Soyuz, as well as on the official site of the Russian Orthodox Church patriarchia.ru. The broadcast could also be seen on two large screens erected by the cathedral.

At the Litany of Fervent Supplication special petitions were offered up and the Primate of the Russian Church read the prayer for Holy Russia.

The homily before holy communion was delivered by archpriest Alexander Khomyak, the dean of the 4th Tver church region and rector of the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin in Tver.

At the end of the Liturgy His Holiness Patriarch Kirill spoke words of exhortation to the bishop of Armavir and Labinsk Savva and present him with an episcopal staff.

The newly-consecrated bishop according to tradition then gave his first blessing as bishop to the faithful.

There was then held short service of glorification to the Kazan icon of Our Lady.

Then the metropolitan of Tver and Kashin Ambrosius greeted the Primate of the Russian Church and presented two encolpions with an image of the Virgin and a cross to His Holiness.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill then delivered a sermon to the faithful gathered.

For his efforts in restoring the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral of Tver the metropolitan of Tver and Kashin Ambrosius was awarded the Order of Saint Daniel of Moscow, 2nd Degree. Also in gratitude for their labours for the good of the Holy Church the Patriarch gifted to the head of the Tver metropolitanate

a memorial encolpion and a cross. His Holiness also presented as a gift to the community of the cathedral an icon of the Mother of God known as 'Three Hands'.

Patriarchal awards were then granted to other people involved in the restoration of the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral. Among those receiving awards were: the governor of the Tver region I.M. Rudenya, the Order of Saint Daniel of Moscow, 2nd Degree; the deputy mayor of Moscow for economic policy and land issues V.V. Yefimov, the Order of Saint Daniel of Moscow, 2nd Degree; the co-founder and member of the observation committee of the Sovkombank bank M.V. Klyukov, the Order of Saint Daniel of Moscow, 3rd Degree; the director of the Agropromkomplektatsia companies S.A. Novikov, the Order of Saint Innocent of Moscow and Kolomna, 3rd Degree; the founder of the company Korall A.S. Smirnov, Patriarchal Badge as constructor of churches; advisor to the governor of the Tver region V.I. Babichev, Patriarchal Badge as constructor of churches; the head of the city of Tver A.V. Ogonkov, Patriarchal Certificate; the director of the Kombinat of Wooden Architecture V.V. Gusev, Patriarchal Certificate; the chief architect for the construction of the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral in Tver and director of the Artis company V.B. Mikryukov, Patriarchal Certificate; the director of the Tver regional Sobor Foundation and director of the Parko Engineering company P.A. Paramonov, Patriarchal Certificate; and the general director of the Nika design studio, Patriarchal Certificate.

For their labours in restoring the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral awards were also given to the sacristan of the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral of Tver Father Sergei Budkov, Patriarchal Certificate and the treasurer of the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral deacon Ioann Zorin, Patriarchal Certificate.

All of the participants of the service were given small icons of Saint Michael of Tver and Saint Anna of Kashin with the blessing of the Patriarch.

At the conclusion of the service in the building of the diocesan chancery there was held a meeting between His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and the governor of the Tver region I.M. Rudenya.

The foundations for the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral of Tver were laid by the Right-Believing prince Michael Yaroslavich of Tver in 1285. It was consecrated in 1290 and is believed to be the first stone church building erected in north east Russia after the Mongol invasion. It became the traditional location for the marriages of Tver's rulers and the place of repose for the princes, princesses and bishops.

In the fourteenth century the church had three altars dedicated to the Transfiguration, the Presentation in the Temple of the Virgin Mary and Saint Dimitrius. The church was renewed and reconstructed under bishop Theodore II Dobroye and prince Michael Alexandrovich. At the end of the fourteenth century the dome was covered with gold, hence the name 'the golden-headed Saviour'. The cathedral often suffered from fires and destructive raids (1328, 1537, the beginning of the seventeenth century, 1636,

1661 and at the other times).

In 1634 and 1635 major repair work was carried out with the support of tsar Michael Fedorovich, but at the end of the seventeenth century it was decided to rebuild the church. A five-domed church was erected between 1689 and 1696 on the means of archbishop Sergius (Veltakhov). The cathedral had three altars: to the Holy Transfiguration, the Presentation in the Temple of the Holy Virgin and Saint Michael (the latter in 1715-1716 was dismantled and transformed into a vestry). Between 1740 and 1760 a three-tier bell-tower was erected housing a church dedicated to Saint John the Merciful, which was also later dismantled.

From 1844 to 1847 the church served as a winter church. In the middle of the nineteenth century there appeared a new porch and a new clock on the bell-tower weighing 1025 pounds. In 1903 above the porch a new floor was added with a vestry, after which the side-chapel dedicated to the Right-Believing prince Michael of Tver was built. In memory of the murder of the governor P.A. Sleptsov in 1913 a chapel in honour of all the saints of Tver was built near the cathedral.

The church was visited by almost all of the Russian sovereigns and members of the imperial family: Catherine II, Nicholas I; Alexander II and others. In 1906 there lived in Tver the renowned conductor and composer A.V. Alexandrov who for more than a decade was the director of the cathedral choir.

Between 1922 and 1933 the church was in the hands of the Renovationists, after which it was closed. On the night of 3rd to 4th April the church was dynamited. The cathedral square was replaced by an area with statues to Lenin and Stalin in Gorky in 1937 and in 1941 was renamed Revolution Square. During the period of the German occupation the invaders built a cemetery here. In 1955 a monument to Bolshevik Mikhail Kalinin was erected in the square,

In 1992 archeological excavations were carried out to determine how much of the church had survived and where exactly it had been located. In 1999 a cross was erected on the site of the sanctuary and in 1992 a memorial stone was also placed there. In 2003 the Sobor Cathedral Foundation was set up and registered. In 2007-2007 a chapel dedicated to all the saints of Tver was built here and in 2010 the historical name of the square was revived.

From 2012 to 2014 the Institute of Archeology under the Russian Academy of Sciences undertook large-scale archeological excavation work, after which the reconstruction of the cathedral was begun. On 15th May 2015 metropolitan Victor (Oleinik) consecrated the foundation stone of the cathedral and on 5th December 2018 the first Divine Liturgy was celebrated in it. In 2018-2019 the excavation work continued and in January of 2019 the foundation was laid for the bell-tower. Domes and crosses were erected in 2019 on the church and in November of 2023 the iconostasis was put in place. On 5th

December 2023 a monument was opened to the first bishop of Tver Saint Symeon who blessed Saint Michael of Tver to construct the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral.

On the night of 4th and 5th May 2024 the first Paschal Liturgy was celebrated after a break of a century.

On 12 June 2024 part of the relics of Saint Michael of Tver were solemnly translated to the cathedral. A vessel with the relics of the saint was returned to the Tver region by His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia on 4th December 2018.

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