



ROCOR First Hierarch and Administrator of Patriarchal Parishes in the USA and Canada Prayerfully Celebrate 19th Anniversary of Reunification of Russian Orthodox Church



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On 21st May 2026, Feast of the Ascension of the Lord and commemoration day of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, hierarchs, clergy and laypeople of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA prayerfully celebrated the 19th anniversary of the signing of the Act of Canonical Communion between the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate.

On the feast day, Metropolitan Nicholas of Eastern America and New York, ROCOR First Hierarch, officiated at the Divine Liturgy in the Synodal Cathedral of the Icon of Our Lady “of the Sign” in New York. Concelebrating with Metropolitan Nicholas were Bishop Matthew of Sourozh, Acting Administrator

of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA and Canada; Archpriest Andrei Sommer, Dean of the Synodal Cathedral of the Sign; Hegumen Nikodim (Balyasnikov), Acting Chancellor of the Patriarchal parishes in the USA; and the cathedral clergy.

The liturgical hymns were performed by the Synodal Choir conducted by Vadim Gan. Attending the Liturgy were numerous laypeople from the Moscow Patriarchate's parishes in the USA and the ROCOR Eastern American Diocese.

After the Litany of Fervent Supplication, Metropolitan Nicholas offered a prayer of thanksgiving for the restoration of the unity of the Russian Church.

At the conclusion of the Liturgy, His Eminence delivered a homily dedicated to the Feast of the Holy Ascension and the commemoration day of St. John the Theologian. As Metropolitan Nicholas reminded all those present, it was on the Feast of the Ascension at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow in 2007 that the ever-memorable Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Rus' and Metropolitan Laurus, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, signed the Act of Canonical Communion, which brought an end to the division between the Church in the homeland and abroad. His Eminence warmly greeted Bishop Matthew and expressed satisfaction at good fraternal relations established by the clergy and parishioners of the ROCOR dioceses and the Patriarchal parishes in North America. In memory of their con-celebration, Metropolitan Nicholas presented to Bishop Matthew a book of sermons and spiritual reflections by the late hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

The Administrator of the Patriarchal parishes in the USA and Canada thanked the ROCOR First Hierarch for the opportunity to celebrate together the Divine Liturgy on the feast day. He also expressed gratitude to Metropolitan Nicholas for giving constant attention and assistance to the Moscow Patriarchate's parishes in the USA. Bishop Matthew presented to His Eminence a panagia with an icon of the Most-Holy Theotokos made by Russian craftsmen.

As the website of the Moscow Patriarchate's Representation in the USA **reports**, the divine service concluded with "Memory Eternal" sung to Patriarch Alexy II and Metropolitan Laurus and with prayerful wishes of longevity and God's help for His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus', along with hierarchs, clergymen and all faithful children of the Russian Orthodox Church in the homeland and abroad.

The hierarchs and clergy then shared a fraternal repast, which was followed by a working meeting between Metropolitan Nicholas and Bishop Matthew. They were joined by Archpriest Seraphim Gan, Chancellor of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia; Archpriest

Andrei Sommer, Dean of the Synodal Cathedral of the Sign; and Hegumen Nikodim (Balyasnikov), Acting Chancellor of the Patriarchal parishes in the USA. The participants in the meeting discussed various topics of cooperation between the parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate in the USA and the ROCOR Eastern American Diocese.

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