



Clergy of the Northern Deaneries of the Eastern American Diocese of ROCOR call for the protection of the persecuted Ukrainian Orthodox Church



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On Wednesday, 22 March, 2023, the Great Lenten Pastoral Retreat of the northern deaneries of the Eastern American Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia concluded with the celebration of the Liturgy of Pre-Sanctified Gifts at Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, NY. The services were led by His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas of Eastern America and New York, First Hierarch of ROCOR, along with His Grace Bishop Luke of Syracuse, the brethren and a multitude of diocesan clerics. Singing at the services was a unified choir of monastics and students of Holy Trinity Seminary under the direction of Deacon Nicholas Kotar and Priest Efrem Willmarth.

*The gathering issued a resolution calling for the protection of the persecuted Ukrainian Orthodox Church. **The resolution** states:*

"Having gathered in Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, New York, for the Lenten retreat and conference of clergy of the northern deaneries of the Eastern American Diocese, we, clergy and

monastics, having bowed down in worship before the Cross, communed of the Holy Mysteries, and honored the memory of the 40 Martyrs of Sebaste, raised up our prayers for the flock entrusted to us. We prayed especially for our persecuted brothers and sisters of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, led by His Beatitude Onuphry, Metropolitan of Kiev & All Ukraine.

As citizens of the United States – founded 250 years ago on the principles of religious rights and freedoms – we ask all of the Orthodox Christians living in this country, as well as its politicians, representatives of various governmental institutions and social organizations, to raise their voices in defense of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, her archpastors, clergy, monastics, and the millions of parishioners who have been subjected to years of persecution by their own government. Having learned of the closure of the Near and Far Caves of the Kiev Caves Lavra – the cradle of Orthodoxy in Rus' – and the looming eviction of all of its monks and inhabitants, including the students of the Kiev Theological Schools – we express our vigorous protest against the actions of the Ukrainian government toward the canonical Church, which nourishes the overwhelming majority of that country's citizens".

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