

## **Conclusion of Centennial celebrations of Polish Orthodox Church at Hagia Sophia Church in Warsaw**



The Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church marked the conclusion of its centennial celebrations with a deeply spiritual and joyful Liturgy at the Hagia Sophia Church in Warsaw on Sunday, 24 November 2024. This event culminated a year of commemorations, which began with the consecration of the church on 14 May 2023, and honoured 100 years of administrative independence.

Over the past months, the Church organised conferences, symposia, lectures, festivals, concerts of sacred music, educational competitions, and exhibitions. Documentaries highlighting the history of the Church and its prominent figures were also produced. Liturgical celebrations and thanksgiving prayers were held across dioceses, with the central event taking place in August at Holy Mount Grabarka during the Feast of the Transfiguration.

Another key moment occurred on 13 November 2024, in the Metropolitan Cathedral in Warsaw, marking the anniversary of the act granting the Church its autocephaly. These events united Orthodox faithful nationwide in gratitude and

prayer.

The concluding Divine Liturgy was celebrated at Hagia Sophia Church in Warsaw, led by His Beatitude Metropolitan Sawa, Primate of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church, accompanied by members of the Holy Synod and clergy.

Metropolitan Sawa was warmly welcomed by faithful and clergy, including a parishioner who, as a child, had first greeted him during his episcopal visit in 1983. Archbishop Paisjusz of Przemyśl and Gorlice delivered the homily, urging believers to prioritise scripture in their daily lives and remain steadfast in their faith amidst modern challenges.

During the service, prayers were offered for the Church's history, its leaders, and the faithful who contributed to Orthodoxy in Poland. Metropolitan Sawa read a thanksgiving prayer expressing gratitude for God's blessings over the past century and asking for protection for the nation, unity among its people, and deliverance from adversity.

The celebrations coincided with the 45th anniversary of Metropolitan Sawa's episcopal ordination. Reflecting on his years of service, he expressed heartfelt gratitude to Christ for calling him to this ministry, acknowledging the challenges and joys he had encountered.

Metropolitan Sawa bestowed the Order of Saint Mary Magdalene (2nd Degree) upon Bishops Paweł and Warsonofiusz for their contributions to the Church. In honour of the occasion, Archbishop Abel of Lublin presented the Metropolitan with an icon of Christ the Great High Priest (Megas Archiereus). The event also featured an exhibition of children's artwork inspired by the Church's centennial.

In his address, Metropolitan Sawa emphasised the spiritual and historical significance of the Hagia Sophia Church in Warsaw, describing it as a beacon of Orthodoxy in the heart of Europe. "The melodies of Orthodox hymnography echo within this sacred space—a miracle and a divine gift," he remarked.

The faithful, clergy, and hierarchs in attendance expressed their profound gratitude to Metropolitan Sawa for his decades of leadership, offering prayers for his continued health and ministry. The day concluded with blessings for the Church's future as a beacon of unwavering faith and truth.

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