

Russian parish in Miami goes over to Constantinople Patriarchate



The most numerous Russian Orthodox parish in Florida has joined the jurisdiction of the American Archdiocese of the Constantinople Church, its head Archimandrite Alexander (Belya) said.

“The American Archdiocese of the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate has taken our parish under its omophorion. I kept my sacerdotal rank and the right to conduct services and wear a frock and a cross. The parish of St. Matrona was given the right to serve according to the old calendar, to which we are used, and in the Church Slavonic language. We were given not only the cover of the patriarchate to which Holy Mount Athos belongs, but also the protection of the government of the United States. You will not have to choose between freedom of religion and freedom of

speech anymore,” the priest told his flock in the church.

Anastasia Gorshkova, a member of the parish council, told *Interfax* the Parish of St. Matrona of Moscow in Miami was created in 2011 by the care of the Russian-speaking diaspora and Archimandrite Alexander (Belya) with the blessing of Metropolitan Hilarion, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCORA). In 2015, the flock purchased a former Methodist church, which they re-equipped according to the Orthodox tradition.

The church was sanctified by the head of ROCORA in the presence of 2,000 flock and the mayor of the city and a representative of the Florida governor. The church was later given cathedral status. The cathedral has a Sunday school sponsored by the parish, which is the only free educational establishment in Miami where the language of instruction is Russian. The flock is also sponsoring the rebuilding of the St. Nicholas Monastery in Fort Myers.

“A group of people launched a large-scale campaign against the father superior in the past few months. Their unsubstantiated accusations against the priest had grave consequences for the parish. An investigative commission created by ROCORA paralyzed the normal life of the parish and created information tensions around the cathedral,” Gorshkova said.

The parish sought assistance from Patriarch Kirill, trying to save itself from unfair persecution, but it did not receive support because ROCORA is a self-governed church in the Russian Orthodox Church and their next step was to seek assistance from the American Archdiocese of the Constantinople Church, Gorshkova said.

“We survived horrible months of unfair persecution, the parish is morally and economically depleted. We are changing jurisdiction due to the grave circumstances, which put us in a deadlock situation. We are asking not to judge us for this step, but pray to the Lord with compassion for the revival of normal parish life,” she said.

- Source: [Interfax](#)