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## **RUSSIAN CHURCH'S PATRIARCHAL PARISHES IN NORTH AMERICA CELEBRATE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF FOUNING**



A special anniversary was marked in the Russian Orthodox Church over the weekend, with the celebration of 50 years since the founding of the Patriarchal Parishes in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

The celebration on September 5 and 6 was timed to coincide with the anniversary

of the repose of Metropolitan Nikodim (Rostov), the first administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA, and “thanks to whom, the crisis of the relationship of the Church in the Fatherland with the North American Metropolia was overcome,” reports the site of the Patriarchal Parishes.

In 1970, the Moscow Patriarchate granted full autocephaly to the Metropolia, which subsequently became known as the Orthodox Church in America, while those parishes that wished to remain under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church were gathered into the union of Patriarchal Parishes.

St. Nicholas Cathedral in New York, built by the New Martyr St. Alexander Hotovitsky and consecrated by the future Patriarch St. Tikhon, is the administrative and ecclesiastical center of the Patriarchal Parishes.

In honor of the occasion, on September 6, special petitions were read out in the parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate in America, Canada, and Mexico “giving thanks to God for His blessings upon the clergy and spiritual children of the Russian Orthodox Church on the American continent, as well as commemorate[ing] the departed archpastors, clergy and faithful of the Patriarchal Parishes.”

At the end of the services, the festal epistle of His Grace Bishop Matthew of Sourozh, the interim administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes, was read in all Patriarchal parishes, in which he noted that the life of the Patriarchal Parishes is “inspired by the archpastoral instruction and personal example of” Met. Nikodim, who reposed 42 years ago.

His epistle concluded: “Today, celebrating the 50th anniversary in the difficult conditions of modern life and the trials facing all of mankind, following the example of our devout and pious predecessors, let us be courageous and strong so that in accordance with the words of the apostles, we may have common joy to praise God and be in favor among all the people, so that the Lord may add daily those to the Church who are being saved. (Acts 2:47).”

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Met. Nikodim also headed the Russian Church's Department for External Church Relations, represented the Russian Church at a number of international inter-confessional meetings, and was named President of the World Council of Churches in 1975. Many have also suspected Met. Nikodim of being a KGB agent, propagating the image of Soviet peace and unity through his inter-Church work. He died in 1978 while in Rome for the installation of Pope John Paul I, who prayed over him in his final moments.

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