

ORTHODOX FAITHFUL CELEBRATE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF CANONIZATION OF ROYAL FAMILY AND FOUNDATION OF CHURCH ON THE BLOOD (+VIDEO)



Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II and his family were canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia on November 1, 1981. On August 20, 2000, they were also canonized by the Moscow Patriarchate.

This Sunday, Orthodox faithful from throughout Russia gathered in the Moscow region to honor the Royal Martyrs on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of their glorification among the saints in the Synaxis of New Martyrs and Confessors of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Every year since 2011, a procession has been held in the Moscow region in honor of St. Elizabeth the Grand Duchess and New Martyr on the Sunday closest to her name's day—the feast of the holy Prophet Zachariah and the Righteous Elizabeth, the parents of St. John the Forerunner on September 5/18. It is the only procession in Russia that includes crossing a river on a pontoon bridge and rafts.

This year's procession was also held in honor of the canonization of the Royal Martyrs, including St. Elizabeth's sister, the Empress Alexandra. About 1,500 faithful from Moscow, Ekaterinbug, Alapayesk, Perm, and elsewhere participated in this year's procession, reports RIA-Novosti.

The route of the procession runs past three historical buildings on the territory of the imperial Ilinskoe-Usovo estate, which was purchased by Emperor Alexander II for his wife, Empress Maria Alexandrovna, in 1864, who subsequently organized a hospital, pharmacy, and school for peasants there. It was this estate that St. Elizabeth later studied the Russian language and holy Orthodoxy.



The celebration began with the Divine Liturgy at the church in the village of Usovo, after which buses took pilgrims to the Church of the Prophet Elijah in the village of Ilinskoe. From there, the procession began with a stop to read the Gospel at the school of Empress Maria, and ended with a common prayer to St. Elizabeth and the Royal Martyrs at the church in Usovo.



On the same day, the Ekaterinburg Diocese celebrated the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the memorial Church on the Blood, built on the site where the Ipatiev House once stood, where the Royal Martyrs were brutally slain on July 17, 1918.

The Divine Liturgy was served by His Eminence Metropolitan Kirill of Ekaterinburg and His Grace Bishop Alexei of Nizhny Tagil and a number of clergy from throughout the diocese.

The first moleben was held on the site of the Ipatiev House on July 16, 1989, attended by several hundreds of people, followed by the reading of the Canon to the Holy Royal Martyrs. On September 23, 2000, His Holiness Patriarch Alexei II laid a memorial capsule in the foundation of the church, and construction was completed in 2003.

On July 16, 2003, the upper church, dedicated to All Saints of Russia, was consecrated, and April 18, 2010, the lower church, dedicated to the Royal Passion-bearers.

A festive concert was held on the square outside the church following the Liturgy on Sunday.

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