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725th anniversary of Kursk Root Icon celebrated in America and Russia



This year marks the 725th anniversary of the discovery of the wonderworking Kursk Root Icon of the Mother of God which has been hugely important in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

Since 1957, the precious icon has been kept at the ROCOR Cathedral in New York. In the past 10 years, ROCOR hierarchs and clergy have taken the icon home to Kursk, Russia, every year at the end of September to bless the faithful there. Unfortunately, the trip was not possible this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, and separate celebrations were held in New York and in Kursk.

On September 20, the eve of the feast of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos and of the Kursk Root Icon, His Grace Bishop Nicholas of Manhattan celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Synodal Cathedral of the Sign in New York, reports the Eastern American Diocese of ROCOR.

The Kursk Root Icon, the Protectress of the Russian Diaspora, was on an analogion

in the center of the church throughout the Liturgy. In his homily at the end of the service, Bp. Nicholas emphasized that the Mother of God must be an example of love, humility, and obedience for us, and emphasized that she hears the prayers of all the faithful through her Kursk Root Icon.
“The icon must be in our hearts and must remind us to love God with our whole heart, and to do everything that we do in God’s name,” Bp. Nicholas exhorted.

On the feast day itself, the holy icon was taken to its first home in America—the New Kursk Root Hermitage in Mahopac, New York.

Again serving Liturgy at the Cathedral in New York, Bp. Nicholas preached:

Today we also glorify our holy Kursk Root Icon of the Mother of God. Today she is at the New Kursk Root Hermitage in Mahopac, where they are also celebrating their patronal feast day. But most often, the icon remains here at Synod, and we thank the Mother of God for this mercy. Nevertheless, the icon sanctifies the entire world [in its travels]. The Queen of Heaven loves the people, and the people of God reverence the Mother of God in return.

He also told the story of how a mother’s prayers before the Kursk Root Icon on its first return trip to Russia miraculously resolved a number of serious problems for her son.

And in Russia, on September 25, the leavetaking of the feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God, a venerated copy of the wonderworking Kursk Root Icon was transferred from the Kursk-Nativity of the Mother of God Hermitage to the Znamenny Monastery in Kursk, in place of a procession that is usually held with the original wonderworking icon.

The Hermitage was founded on the site where the Icon miraculously appeared in 1295. From 1618, the Icon was mainly kept in the cathedral, eventually making its way to America via Serbia after the Russian revolution.



On the morning of September 25, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated at the hermitage by His Grace Bishop Paisy of Zheleznogorsk with clergy of the Kursk Metropolitanate.

Addressing the congregation at the end of the Liturgy, Bp. Paisy said: “I congratulate you all, dear fathers, brothers, and sisters, on this autumn feast of the Kursk Root Mother of God ‘of the Sign.’” And referring to the ongoing pandemic with its accompanying restrictions in Church life, he urged: “Don’t be disturbed, don’t grieve, and don’t despair. Turn everything into a prayer to Our Lady the Theotokos. And may the Mother of God reward you for your love for this holy place by answering your prayers!”



The service ended with a procession with the copy of the Kursk Root Icon from the main cathedral to the western gate of the monastery, from where the icon was taken by car to the Znamenny Cathedral in Kursk, where it was met by Bp. Paisy with the clergy of the Znamenny Monastery, the mayor of Kursk, and the Orthodox faithful of the city. A paraklesis to the Mother of God was then served before the icon.

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