

## **POLISH CHURCH CELEBRATES 300TH ANNIVERSARY OF DISCOVERY OF RELICS OF CHILD-MARTYR GABRIEL OF BIAŁYSTOK**



On Tuesday, September 22, celebrations were held in the Polish Orthodox Church's St. Nicholas Cathedral in Białystok on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the discovery of the relics of the holy Child-Martyr St. Gabriel of Białystok and the 28th anniversary of their transfer from Grodno to Białystok.

The All-Night Vigil and Divine Liturgy for the feast were celebrated by His Beatitude Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland together with His Eminence Archbishop Jakub of Białystok and Gdańsk and several other hierarchs of the Polish Church, reports the official Polish Church website.



The service was sung by three cathedral choirs.

Just before the All-Night Vigil, the hierarchs, clergy, and faithful gathered to greet the relics of St. Gabriel, which had been at the convent in Zwierki since May 2.

In his homily, Bishop Barsanuphy of Siemiatycze recalled that St. Gabriel was raised in a God-fearing family that took him to church and taught him to pray and love God. Conversely, faith in God and relations between parents and children are often questioned today, His Grace said, due to non-Orthodox psychological and sociological theories.

Therefore, St. Gabriel and his parents should serve as role models for all Orthodox families. He concluded by speaking of St. Gabriel's presence through his prayers for every child, comforting those who are sad and mourning.





Following the Liturgy, Met. Sawa also addressed the congregation, noting that in celebrating the discovery of St. Gabriel's relics, they are continuing the story of the Child-Martyr who ploughed the earth with his blood. And the blood of the martyrs always bears fruit, the Polish primate emphasized, if only we accept this gift. One of the fruits of the faith, he noted, was the solemn transfer of the relics of St. Gabriel from Grodno to Białystok in 1992.

On the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the discovery of his relics, a new recording of an akathist to St. Gabriel was released.



The Child-Martyr Gabriel (+ 1690) was killed when he was only 6 years old. One day when his parents were away, he was lured out of his house by a Jewish tenant named Schutko, who kidnapped him, and stabbed him and drained his blood for 9 days. The man then discarded St. Gabriel's body in a field near his village.

His incorrupt relics were discovered 30 years later, in 1720, when, during an epidemic, dead children were often buried near St. Gabriel's resting place, thus venerating his martyrdom and feeling the extraordinary grace flowing from the place. During one such burial, St. Gabriel's coffin was broken, and when his body was then exhumed, he was found to be incorrupt. Many healings and the cessation of the epidemic are connected with this discovery.



His precious relics were carried in a solemn procession to the church in Zwierki and placed in a crypt in the basement.

September 22 marks the commemoration of the transfer of his relics from Grodno to Białystok in 1992.

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