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RUSSIAN CHURCH LIKELY TO RECOGNIZE ROMANOV REMAINS, METROPOLITAN HILARION BELIEVES



It’s likely that the Russian Orthodox Church will finally recognize the authenticity of the famous “Ekaterinburg remains,” believed to belong to Tsar-Martyr Nicholas and his sainted family, at its upcoming Bishops’ Council in November, believes one high-ranking hierarch.

At its session in June, the Russian Holy Synod resolved to send the matter to the Bishops’ Council for examination, which will be convened in November. As opposed to the Holy Synod, the Bishops’ Council includes every hierarch of the Russian Church and is therefore the highest governing body.

As His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, the head of the Russian Church’s Department for External Church Relations, explained on the latest edition of the Church and the World television program, the broad range of serious scientific examinations (molecular-genetic, physical-chemical, trace evidence, ballistic, handwriting, historical-archival, soil science, forensic, anthropological

studies, and more) that have been carried out on the remains over the past years "convincingly shows that the remains found near Ekaterinburg are really the remains of the Royal Family."

In fact, the experts themselves have publicly stated several times that their findings are conclusive. In an interview last July, senior investigator Marina Molodtsova repeated that the examinations have verified the authenticity of the remains, though investigations were continuing in order to "eliminate the slightest doubt."

However, as His Eminence noted, while the results of the examinations have been analyzed by the Holy Synod, many more bishops have yet to become well acquainted with them.

"I think as soon as this takes place—probably at the Bishops' Council in November—the authenticity of the 'Ekaterinburg remains' will be recognized by the Church," Met. Hilarion said.

However, the hierarch also cautioned not to jump to conclusions, because every hierarch has the freedom to react to the examinations his own way, and thus it's impossible to say for sure what will happen.

A grave with nine bodies was found on Staraya Koptyakovskaya Road near Ekaterinburg in July 1991. The remains were identified as those of Emperor Nicholas II, his 46-year-old wife Alexandra Fyodorovna, their daughters Olga, 22, Tatiana, 21, and Anastasia, 17, and their servants Eugene Botkin, 53, Anna Demidova, 40, Alexei Trupp, 62, and Ivan Kharitonov, 48.

Members of the imperial family were buried at a sepulcher of the Peter and Paul Cathedral in St. Petersburg.

The remains of two more people were discovered during archaeological excavation works 70 meters south of the first grave on July 26, 2007. The remains have still not been buried, but numerous expert analyses indicate that the remains were most likely those of Tsarevich Alexei and his sister Maria.

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