



The 30th Anniversary of the Episcopal Consecration of the First Hierarchy of the Russian Church Abroad

His Eminence was joined by the members of the Synod of Bishops, which had concluded its latest meeting the day before; representatives of other Local Orthodox Churches serving in North America; the clergymen of the cathedral; members of the Synodal administration in clerical rank; clergymen of other dioceses and stavropeghial parishes of the Russian Church Abroad. Many worshipers were on hand to venerate the Kursk-Root Icon and to congratulate Vladyka Metropolitan.

The Synodal Choir sang under the direction of Peter Fekula. His Eminence Archbishop Michael of Geneva and Western European delivered a sermon before the Eucharist.

After a moleben of thanksgiving and the dismissal, His Eminence Archbishop Kyrill of San Francisco and Western America read a congratulatory message from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, which His Eminence Archbishop Mark of Berlin and Germany read congratulations from the Synod of Bishops:

“Your Eminence Vladyko!

“On this important day, the thirtieth anniversary of the archpastoral service of Your Eminence, the Holy Synod of Bishops expresses our heartfelt congratulations to our Primate and merciful father.

“On important events and anniversaries relating to outstanding public figures, attention is customarily drawn to the special characteristics of the person, which are unique to him and describe his persona. And so, when in the life of an highly-placed person of one calling or another such an important date arrives, he becomes the center of attention of individual persons as well as the People of God and society at large. “

Your fatherly care for your flock, your monastic meekness, your responsiveness to those in need and other virtues have brought forth fruit in the form of filial love to you, a spiritual award to a loving father which you should receive properly, especially on this feast day of the Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God ‘of the Sign,’ and the anniversary of your own personal Pentecost. Everyone knows that the doors of your residence are always open to all. Besides clergymen, you are visited by many laypersons. Some approach you for material aid, others unabashedly come to you with complaints. How much meekness, patience, wisdom is need to properly resolve all needs during these wicked days! We know, too, that beyond your official office, our blessed First Hierarchy is unpretentious and accessible. You always and everywhere express genuine interest in all good works, hastening to offer your wise counsel and blessings.

“Since the very first days of your episcopal service, you have exhibited constant care for our monasteries, parishes, missionary communities, educational institutions and church-based organizations. You lovingly and earnestly perform the cycle of divine services, zealously preserve canon law, and serve as an example to your clergy and flock. “The grateful members of the Synod of Bishops, the clergymen and God-preserved flock of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of



Russia beseech the Chief Pastor, Christ, that He extend the days of your life, granting you strength, good health and firmness to the benefit of the Holy Church of Christ and to the consolation of those who love and respect you.”

Archbishop Mark then gave His Eminence a set of vestments as a gift from his fellow monks and nuns in Bavaria. Metropolitan Hilarion was likewise given a set of vestments and also a Liturgical book from the clergymen and parishioners of the cathedral.

In his brief response, His Eminence Vladyka Hilarion thanked the archpastors, clergymen and worshipers for their prayer and support, wishing them God’s abundant mercies and blessings.

The celebrations continued as the hierarchs, clergy and worshipers gathered at a nearby Greek cathedral hall.