



## **The Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God "of the Sign" Visits Queensland, Australia**

Faithful from the Brisbane area gathered to welcome the icon, their hearts filled with joy and hope.

The next morning, March 15, the cathedral was filled over capacity for Divine Liturgy. The great holy image, which healed the young St Seraphim of Sarov in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was placed in the middle of the cathedral next to the crucifix. The people stood in line to venerate the icon as prayers were lifted to the Mother of God and to the Life-Creating Cross. The Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross is a great day in its own right, and the Kursk-Root Icon contributed special significance to the day.

Mitred Protopriest Michael Klebansky officiated at the service along with Protopriest Gabriel Makarov, Priest Gabriel Lapardin, Priest Alexander Borodin, Priest John Weir, Priest Andrew Smith, Priest Alexander Paramonov, Priest Raymond Smith, along with Protodeacon German Polorotov, Deacon Vladimir Bigdan and Deacon Basil Konstantinidis.

The bells pealed, summoning the faithful to divine service, as the choir sang magnificently under the direction of Mr Artem Men. A graceful, pious joy filled the hearts of those in attendance as the chorus sang "Before the Cross we fall down in worship, O Master, and Thy holy resurrection we glorify."

The Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God has historically been venerated particularly during periods of calamity, alien invasion, internecine strife and the defeat of enemies. This day, too, prayers for peace were lifted up before it for the people of Ukraine, for peace on earth and between our common compatriots, for the preservation of all those scattered throughout the world.



We spoke to Fr Gabriel Makaraov after Divine Liturgy:

-Fr Gabriel, it is a special day in Brisbane. The Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God “of the Sign” has once again visited us. This holy image is visiting us for the first time since the construction of a new altar, with St Nicholas Cathedral now adorned by new frescos. One senses something significant in this visit ...

-Indeed, today is a special day. The veneration of the Life-Creating Cross and of the Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God “of the Sign” occurring in one day. Our world is rocked by conflict today, conflict with our fraternal people of Ukraine. The enmity is even sensed here in Australia. The icon’s arrival in Brisbane has united our local Orthodox Christians despite any political differences. We don’t see such numbers except for Christmas and Pascha. Today we see a lot of new people, people I’ve never seen before, many young people, a lot of people taking Communion, and I hope that our prayers bring forth fruit. The Mother of God once again gathered us all under her omophorion, and preserves us wither love. We must nurture our love for each other in our hearts. Матерь...

Living on this distant continent, we can barely sense the depth of the mercy and spiritual joy that is offered to us as we directly venerate the Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God “of the Sign.” The Hodigitria of



the Russian Orthodox people living by Divine Providence throughout the world visits us in Australia annually.