



## **ВОСТОЧНО-АМЕРИКАНСКАЯ ЕПАРХИЯ**

**Русская Православная Церковь Заграницей**

## **EASTERN AMERICAN DIOCESE**

**Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia**

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September 1/14, 2019

*Church Indiction, Venerable Symeon the Stylite*

### **APPEAL**

**by Metropolitan HILARION of Eastern America & New York,  
First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad;**

**Bishop NICHOLAS of Manhattan, vicar of the Eastern American Diocese;  
and the Diocesan Council of the Eastern American Diocese  
of the Russian Church Abroad to the clergy and flock of Florida**

Beloved in the Lord fathers, brothers, and sisters!

As a result of some confusion and messages from members of our Church to the diocesan ecclesiastical authorities regarding the activities and behavior of Archimandrite Alexander (Belya) and Ivan A. Belya in Florida, the following measures have been adopted by the diocesan ecclesiastical authorities:

- 1) By directive of the Ruling Bishop, Archimandrite Alexander (Belya) is suspended from serving, and is not permitted to don the riassa and pectoral cross or to dispense blessings; is released from his duties at dean of the Florida Deanery of the Eastern American Diocese; and is suspended from his position as rector of Blessed Matrona of Moscow Cathedral in Miami and Saint Nicholas Monastery in North Fort Myers, for the duration of the investigation and whatever actions follow, as required by the Ruling Bishop for the purposes of clarifying and resolving the current situation; for a period not to exceed one year. Ivan A. Belya is suspended from Holy Communion, and is not permitted to don the cassock; accordingly, he is suspended from all of his ecclesiastical duties and responsibilities in all institutions of the Russian Church Abroad, and more precisely, his position as warden in Saint John the Forerunner Cathedral in Brooklyn and Blessed Matrona of Moscow Cathedral in Miami, for the duration of the investigation and whatever actions follow, as required by the Ruling Bishop for the purposes of clarifying and resolving the current situation; for a period not to exceed one year.
- 2) By directive of the Ruling Bishop, an investigative commission has been empaneled, consisting of: Abbot Arseny (Manko) – chairman, Archpriest Serge Ledkovsky – secretary;

Hieromonk Alexander (Lisnichuk), and Priest George Temidis. The investigative commission is directed to visit the above-named parish and monastery, and there to familiarize itself with the status of current affairs (pastoral, administrative, legal, and financial), interviewing both Archimandrite Alexander (Belya) and Ivan A. Belya, as well as worshippers and benefactors of the cathedral parish and the monastery who have brought forward accusations against them, with the goal of gathering all available testimony.

- 3) By directive of the Ruling Bishop, going forward until the end of the investigation, Archimandrite Alexander (Belya) and Ivan A. Belya, as well as any other individuals or groups hoping to bring petitions either for or against them, must address these to the Ruling Bishop and his vicar through Abbot Arseny (Manko), chairman of the investigative commission. The investigative commission will determine the manner in which it can be contacted, and will make this information publicly available. All faithful children of the Russian Church Abroad have a blessing to work with this commission. Any individuals or groups who violate this directive may be subject to ecclesiastical sanction for disobedience to the Ruling Bishop.
- 4) By directive of the Ruling Bishop, any and all church gatherings or actions, designed to aggravate or mitigate the accusations against Archimandrite Alexander (Belya) and Ivan A. Belya, are forbidden within the territory of the Eastern American Diocese. Any individuals or groups who violate this directive may be subject to ecclesiastical sanction for disobedience to the Ruling Bishop.
- 5) By directive of the Ruling Bishop, for the duration of the investigation and whatever actions follow, as required by the Ruling Bishop for the purposes of clarifying and resolving the current situation; for a period not to exceed one year, any and all parochial or fraternal meetings at Blessed Matrona of Moscow Cathedral in Miami and Saint Nicholas Monastery in North Fort Myers, which have as their goal the election, reëlection, or rotation of office-holders is forbidden. If any of these was held after August 21/September 3, 2019, it is not blessed to submit the resolutions thereof to the Ruling Bishop for final confirmation.
- 6) In connection with the above, any copies of directives or instructions in circulation dated later than December 19, 2018/January 1, 2019, which are not in keeping with the letter and spirit of the current situation must be submitted to the diocesan chancery for examination of their authenticity.

**The following clarification is offered to the Church community:**

The launch of an investigation at Blessed Matrona of Moscow Cathedral in Miami and Saint Nicholas Monastery in North Fort Myers does not indicate in advance either conviction or exoneration of the above-mentioned individuals of any ecclesiastical crime or sin. The investigative commission does not possess the full powers of the Spiritual Court. It is intended to carry out its investigation dispassionately. The timely fulfilment of the commission's work will, in part, depend upon how calmly and quickly it is permitted to perform said work, and how fully it will be given the coöperation of everyone whose testimony it deems necessary to obtain.

Although this ongoing situation exhibits certain extraordinary characteristics, nothing is taking place that can be permitted to distract any one of us from the primary care of our lives – seeing to our salvation and striving to attain the Heavenly Kingdom!

We call upon our entire flock, in whatever way they may be disturbed by these events, to preserve within themselves spiritual centeredness, to maintain peace of the soul, and to show mercy and compassion to one another; this we pray for all of you!

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, peace, and tranquility abide with you all!

+ Hilarion

Metropolitan of Eastern America & New York  
*First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad*



+ Nicholas

Bishop of Manhattan  
*Vicar of the Eastern American Diocese*