September 21, 2016 #RPSC, #Old-Beyeds abroad25

Priest Pavel Fefelov: "Homeland for us is our Church"

Поделитесь этим материалом

On Sunday, September 18, 2016, on the 13th week after Pentecost, at the invitation of the rector of the capital's church of St. Nicholas on Tver Priest **Alexei Lopatin was** served by a guest from America - **priest Pavel Fefelov**. The first time o. Pavel visited Russia in the distant 1988, on the millennium of the baptism of Russia, and then in Rogozhsky he was remembered as a joyful and very active young deacon. Over the years, he has turned a little gray, but remained the same devoted to the Lord man with a joyful heart and firm faith. Although Father Paul lives in America far from Russia, he speaks pure Russian and comes from those Old Believers who, since the time of the church schism, did not absorb the atmosphere and spirit of the New Believer during the persecution during the tsarist period and the period of Soviet power, but went far beyond their country, preserving the faith and traditions of Russia. He and his mother Natalia have 7 daughters, and in Nizhny Novgorod the son-in-law Davyd serves as a deacon. Such guests in Russia do not happen every day, so we, of

course, met with Fr. Pavel and Mother Natalia and warmly communicated with them after the Liturgy.

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Father, tell me, how did you and the Russian Old Believers in general end up in America?

It was according to God's special view! There were no Old Believers anywhere in the world: neither in Africa, nor in Brazil, nor in America (*meaning the United States - editor's note*), but after the split and persecution, our communities were formed there. The words of the Lord about preaching all over the world have come true! My ancestors come from Perm Krai. My maternal grandmother called herself *Perm* all the time, and my father used to say: "*We are people from Vyatka*". They came from the temporal agreement. I don't know how, but they found themselves in the Far East, and in the 1930s my grandfather and grandmother crossed the border to China. At that time, they did not leave alone - there were strong persecutions in the country of wealthy

people who had something, so many escaped from persecution, uniting in large groups. They couldn't take much with them because they were sailing on rafts. They could only take what fit in the bag from the farm. Leaving everything and crossing the border, they settled east of Harbin, in the Chinese village of **Romanovka**. Our Old Believers lived here. My father just lived in this village. Thanks to their labors, they got used to it well. My grandfather had a mill, and when my father was still young, we also hunted. I was also born in China in January 1954, but not in Romanovka itself, but in a nearby village, I don't remember the name, many years have passed since then.



Somewhere in 1956, the Russians came and expelled the Japanese from China, the Chinese and Russians defeated Japan in those areas. Ours were offered either to return to Russia or stay here. Many wanted to come back. My grandfather **Sazon Makeevich** and my father's older brother, **Evstratia**, were called to the station as if to unload the wagons, but when they arrived there in a group from the village, they were all arrested and put on the train they were supposed to unload. People were loaded and taken to the Far East. From this case, we realized that we should not return to Russia, but we should go even further.

Matushka Natalia: And my father went to this meeting, and some soldier he knew said: *don't go there, there will be trouble there*. And he didn't go, but managed to escape.

Father Pavel: Grandfather and brother were kidnapped to Magadan camps, Uncle Evstratiy was only 16 years old. They lived in the camp for a decade and stayed in the Far East in Khabarovsk. We even have an aunt there so far. And my father, two brothers and grandmother stayed to live in China. The sons began to hunt, farm, and harvest hay. They were given a choice: to stay in China or go to Russia. Many people chose to go to Russia, but my grandmother and father, knowing what trouble could threaten in Russia, decided to go to Hong Kong. From Hong Kong, we were taken as a group to South America, to Brazil.

There were difficult material conditions there: it was difficult to engage in farming, they sowed rice, there was no hunting. I was 9 years old then. In Brazil, the attitude towards us was normal, there was no pressure and persecution anymore. It was just hard for us to live in those parts. The chapel Old Believers who stayed there managed to settle in and now live in Brazil, and in 1963 we moved to the state of Oregon, where we still live today. Now our Ascension Church is located here, Fr. **Porphyry** and Fr. **Nikita Toran**.

And what year did you come to Alaska? How did you meet your mother?

This is where our story with mother begins. We met in Oregon when we were kids. We gathered in groups there, we were all bezpopovtsy. And somewhere in 1969, the resettlement to Alaska began. Some of our people have already started moving there. In 1972 we got married, and in 1976 we moved to Alaska, to the village. Nikolaevsk. This village was founded in 1969 and was bezpopovsky, there was a prayer station in the name of St. Nicholas.



We had nothing but land and forest around. At first, we lived in tents. They cut down the forest and started building houses. That's how the community came into being. Father **Kondrat** served as the rector of our bezpopovskaya prayer hone. However, since 1982 we have been talking about the transition to the Belokrinits agreement, and in January 1983 a group of our Christians went to Romania to seek the priesthood.

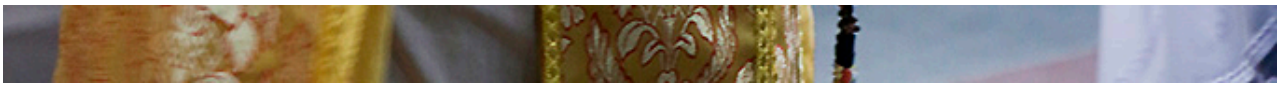
What prompted you to seek the priesthood?

We didn't know there were priests. We lived without communion and other church sacraments, although my godfather Kondrat Fefelov,

being a non-popov mentor, secretly kept the Holy Gifts with him. Our great-grandfathers, who had already been annexed to the Church in Russia (Belokrinitsky consent), left him with communion. My uncle, Prokhor Grigorievich, had a wife from Popovtsev - Aunt **Galina**. And she began to tell him: "*You are mistaken, believing that there are no more priests and sacraments, but in fact they are there and remained with the Belkrinitsy consent*." Correspondence with Bishop **Joseph** of Australia (he was not a bishop then) began. This correspondence excited people to search for spirituality, we began to study books, and made sure that we were empty and had no opportunity for salvation without the Church. Honor and glory to God that He sent us to Romania, and there we found ourselves under the leadership of Bishop **Cyprian** in the city of Braile (Vladyka Joasaph was already sick). He is such a hospitable, understanding person, accepted us and additionally began to convince us of the truth of faith, and then our people understood the situation we were in. O. Kondrat did not even return, he stayed to study there, and he was ordained a priest in early 1983 in Brail.







We have already gathered in another group and went to Romania with our mother to make sure ourselves. We were baptized in the Danube at Easter, and we were married for a week on Fomina. And since then we have opened a community in Alaska. When Father Kondrat returned, the fight with the bezpopovites began, whose prayer hall would be. Since Fr. Kondrat was the abbot, at first we decided to take the temple for ourselves. But there were some troubles, and we decided to build another temple. It was in 1983-1984. As a result, our temple remained, and there was a sudden fire in the bezpopov people, and that prayer house burned down.

Three years later, Bishop Joseph, who was also ordained in Romania, is already coming. In 1986, I was made a deacon. And since that time I began to serve God at the throne. I served as a deacon in Alaska for 10 years. We had to put a bishop, and here was a candidate in Romania, Bishop Justin, whom we called. It was our first bishop to America from Romania, and the main troubles fell on me. After the death of Fr. Kondrat in this temple, in the village of Nikolaevsk, is served by Fr. **Nikola Yakunin**, and his son **Vasily Nikolaevich Yakunin** serves as a deacon there. They are now building a large church near the old temple.

Does the state help, or do they build at their own expense?

Mostly at your own expense. We don't have any help and benefits from

the state.

Is there no pressure from the state?

No. We got church freedom from the very beginning.

In that area, in the end, who became more: Belokrinitsky or bezpopovtsy?

Most of them are left without popov.

How many countries have you traveled to and what do you consider your homeland?

Mother Natalia: We were born in China, lived in Hong Kong, lived in Brazil, then in Oregon, then in Alaska, then in Australia, and now we live in Oregon again.

Father Paul: The Motherland for us is our Church. Wherever we go, there is a house everywhere. In 1996, before the Cathedral in Belaya Krinitsa, my mother and I moved from Nikolaevsky to Australia. The construction of the church began there, I helped a little, I made towers and domes with my own hands. And so in 2000 in Sydney there was a consecration of a large stone temple in the name of the Assumption of the Virgin. In the first year after the consecration, they decided to go back to America. We came to America, settled in Oregon. I served as a deacon here, we lived there for five years. Again, I received an invitation from Australia to become a priest, because their local priest is already Fr. Peter rested, and they needed a priest. I was placed on the eve of the feast of Archangel Michael, and already in early 2006 we moved back to Australia.



And then I had a family sadness. My father got sick, and I had to choose: either go to Oregon to take care of my father, or stay in Sydney. I decided to go to take care of my father. Of course, I received a bishop's punishment for this choice, I suffered it. You could say that my father rested in my arms. I stayed in Oregon, like a pensioner, a substitute priest. And there they put a young priest, who was called from Romania. In Oregon now two priests serve, as I said, oh. Porphyry and Fr. Nikita Torana. After the death of Bishop Justin, it was a buss to keep Bishop Sophronius with us. He painted the temple in Nikolaevsk, and when he became a bishop, he painted the temple in Sydney. With the blessing of Vlady Sophroniy, I have now come to your region. That's my little story.

What jobs or crafts are Alaskan Old Believers mainly engaged in today?

Most of our people in Alaska are engaged in fishing. We used to have a shipyard there. Of course, this plant closed in difficult times. There are also those who work in construction. Everyone survives as best they can.

Are there those among the Old Believers who have achieved any career success in politics or business? Do they help the Church?

There are people in business. Many have graduated from universities,

now they work in large companies (for example, in the company "B-Pi"). This is already the generation of our children. People of my age and older were still engaged in farming. Many people participate in the life of the Church, help financially. We were recently in Lyskovo, I was told that money for the construction of the temple was sent there from Australia. They help a lot in Romania. O. Kondrat built a church in Khabarovsk at the expense of donations from abroad.

Tell me, how does the everyday life of American Old Believers differ from the life of Russians? It is said that the houses of the Old Believers in the United States are built on large land plots far from each other, people use numerous transports, it is allowed to carry weapons.

Yes, there is no ban on weapons in America. But I don't even know which of ours wears it. True, they go hunting and there are weapons for hunting in every house. They go fishing. In Oregon, Old Believers maintain farms, are engaged in agriculture, grow berries, nuts. Some may even have 50, 100 hectares of land. Everyone has their own home

in America. It's like you have houses outside the city, so do we have. We avoid big cities. Our daughter lived in an apartment, but we realized that she pays much more money for rent. Why live there and give money away? We decided to help her, bought a house. Than to give rent to someone, let them pay for their house better.

Are there any prospects in America in terms of worldly life and work?

A working person in America has all the opportunities, but a lazy person has nothing to do there. And in general, it seems to me that in any country a working person will find a place for himself. Since tsarist times, Russia has been the first country in the world, why? - Because people were hardworking!

Is there crime in the country?

It depends on where you are. There is crime in big cities, and on the outskirts, where our people live, it's calm. Occasionally there are robberies.

Do the Old Believers there retain their knowledge of the Russian language, church and liturgical traditions, do you have Old Believer traditions that differ from those of the Russian ones?

Everything is served in Old Slavonic in the church. They try to teach children the Old Slavonic language. But, unfortunately, the Russian language is starting to get lost, because all education in schools is only in English.

You speak pure Russian...

It's from my parents. They came to America and didn't know English. We were brought to America. We are the first generation of Russian emigrants. Here's our family: some of our children have already married Americans, their children don't understand Russian at all. But my mother and I can speak English fluently.

It turns out that parishioners who know English, but don't know Russian well, don't understand anything in the church? Are there many of them?

When young people come to church, you already think that you should

speak a sermon in English. However, the older generation is against it. And the young people stand and count flies on the ceiling, because they don't understand anything. There were conversations on this topic, but so far the sermon is only in Russian.



In general, I think that faith should be comprehend in the native language, in which a person understands. If mom and dad don't know

Russian, then their child should preach faith in their native English. We have children who can read Russian, but there are few of them. Children go to an ordinary American school, and, of course, it is already very difficult for them to keep their Russian language.

Does Archbishop Sophronius of Australia-Canado-American often come to your and other parishes? What can I tell you about these visits?



Archbishop Sophronius tries to visit all our communities during the year. He spends three or four months in Sydney, three or four months in Oregon, in Alaska. He has a cell in every community where he lives. For example, he comes to the patronal feast, or, sometimes, will serve for a month or two. We just spread out the holidays. For example, he leaves for the Assumption and Intercession in Australia, then comes to Oregon for the Ascension and, sometimes, stays until the day of Nikolin.

By the way, Bishop Sophronius sends peace and his Archpastoral blessing to Russia. I wish you all brotherly love and strength in the faith of Christ!

Father, you were in Russia for the first time in 1988, on the anniversary of the Baptism of Russia, what, in your opinion, has changed over the years?

It's getting cleaner on the roads. Your churches have been renewed. For example, in the church of St. Nikola, where I served today, last time I saw bare walls, and now everything is well-maintained here. At the airport, people seem to have become more lenient. And what's most interesting, the shops have become full. And they used to be empty. People began to smile more often. McDonald's taught you to smile (*laughs*).

In your opinion, is there still spirituality in Russia, are we real Old Believers or have we already translated?

If you weren't real, I wouldn't come to you (*smiles*). May God save it for all of us!

What would you like to wish for the younger generation of Old Believers?

Keep your heartfelt faith. This is the most basic. I also wish you to preserve Old Believer customs and not assimilate with the world around you. Well, don't abuse the World Wide Web (*smiles*). Remain as open to God as Protopope Habakkuk and our holy forefathers commanded us. Remember that the Christian life is not in the letter and the dot, but in love. Love each other, as Christ commanded us, and then peace will be between us!

The editorial board of the site "**Russian Faith**" on behalf of all our readers expresses gratitude to **Fr. To Pavel** and mother **Natalia** for an interesting story about the life of Old Believers in America. May Christ save you! We also express our special gratitude to **Fr. Alexey Lopatin** for his help in preparing the material and professional photos.

Did you like the material?

The best gratitude for our work is to subscribe to our channels on social networks and share them with your friends!

Comments (25)

To comment

Hieray Pankratov

10 years ago

Somewhere in 1956, the Russians came and kicked the Japanese out of China - sorry, it was still in August 1945:)

Reply 0

Vladimir*

10 years ago

There are a lot of something unexpected... For a Russian person, Russia is no longer a homeland? Children don't know Russian, they speak English... In the interview, not a word about love for Russia! And if suddenly, God forbid, the conflict is military, will the Old Believers from America fight with us?

Reply 0

Aleko Bezgodov

10 years ago

And how was it before? we also have one prince against another prince went to war and Christians (Old believers, by the way) beat each other and in very large numbers.

Reply 0

Konstantin

10 years ago

Hier, well, I made a mistake, so what!? To call him to the council for that, judge, you are our merciless!?

Reply 0

Sergey 985

10 years ago

> Remember that Christian life is not about the letter and the dot, but about love.

What?! After all, Father America has depraved it. How is it not in the letter and the dot? What kind of heresy is this? In the letter and the dot! Even any jealous neophyte here knows it. Love is so, it's only when the whole letter with a period is respected, then maybe...

Sermon in English... Is it possible? So they will come to prayers in English, and how to understand in the translations they kept the only one, did they translate it too or not?

Reply 0

Archpriest John Mirolyubov

10 years ago

Can I get an answer to this question: has it been removed from o. Paul's ban on worship, imposed earlier by Archbishop Sophronius?

Reply 0

Irina Kosyreva

10 years ago

"I decided to go to take care of my father. Of course, I received a bishop's punishment for this choice, I suffered it." Apparently, this was the bishop's punishment, the ban on worship?

Reply 0

Archpriest John Mirolyubov

10 years ago

That's understandable. The question is different: has this ban been lifted?

Reply 0

Konstantin

10 years ago

What kind of horror is this? what kind of humiliation of a person? Love after

the letter and the dot??? It's not Christianity. It's filmed or not filmed, when and what happened, English, America... is there anything else interested in? Is that envy? stupidity? anger?

Reply 0

Archpriest John Mirolyubov

10 years ago

What does malice and America have to do with it? The attitude to canon law in the RPSC is interesting. Father just evokes a certain sympathy. But it's for the heart and feelings.

Reply 0

Sergey 985

10 years ago

Konstantin, no malice. But when the same Fr. Alexander Pankratov justifies the executions of heretics, he appeals not to Christian love, but to what is written. And Fr. Alexander, we have an Old Believer priest, a teacher of the MSDU and all that. So he is an Old Believer. That's why I was surprised by such a re-prioritization in the article.

Reply 0

Konstantin

10 years ago

Fr. Alexander is himself, but not Old Believers (and is it there?). And it's definitely not about Father Alexander. No one found anything good and useful in the interview, no one spoke positively. They found mistakes, expressed reproaches and accusations, became interested in prohibitions and reproaches in someone else's Church (hello to the hours of the patriarch). Beautiful Christianity.!

Reply 0

Russian faith

10 years ago

We contacted the priest and clarified it again. The ban on him, of course, has

already been lifted. Otherwise, he would not have served the Liturgy on September 18 and would not have written in the past tense about "punishment"

Reply 0

Archpriest John Mirolyubov

10 years ago

In an interview with Fr. Alexandra has both good and useful things. I said that. The question of his canonical dignity is not taken "from the ceiling", but because of the information at all, in my opinion, not "good and useful", but, alas, the Old Believer popov site! Why does a simple and natural question cause an acutely hysterical reaction? If everyone on this site is stranger to each other, then why was it created at all? Why do other visitors of the site see only evil and insidious intent in everything, and not an attempt to understand something better? A developed person should be able to distinguish irony from sarcasm and understand where the information about "self" is and where is characteristic of confession (or, on the contrary, uncharacteristic). I ask questions about what I'm interested in, but most often I get answers on the principle of "the fool himself" (the patriarch's watch). This is a "polemic" of primary school students.

Reply 0

Archpriest John Mirolyubov

10 years ago

In general, oh. Pavel said a lot of good and right things, but I'm afraid to support him so that it wouldn't be harmful to him. Such a wonderful Christianity in another Old Believer's environment!
I'll tell him one thing (not as a reproach): bishop's punishment is not "undergone". Konstantin's replicas are undergoing.

Reply 0

Konstantin

10 years ago

The question is not simple and not natural. I do not understand why someone else's Church is of interest only in such issues - in the ban of anyone or not? a natural and simple question can be of a different kind. For example, how do

the holidays take place in America and Australia? How do they teach in Sunday schools? Since the question was taken on a third-party site, it means that you should continue to find out there (although it is still not clear why people from another Church find out what and how in ours, their problems are not enough?) Anyone can be on the site, there are no strangers here. I don't understand what can be better understood by the question of prohibitions?? Yes, you can see the bad in this matter - for example, again: here, look, Father Pavel may not have the right to serve!!! And what about irony and sarcasm??? Was the question about the ban ironic and sarcastic? then it's definitely not a Christian virtue. You need to ask directly, without hidden meanings. It's not very decent to ask questions about the internal affairs of a foreign Church, that's why the answer is as follows. Don't climb into someone else's monastery, do your own business and talk about them. Moreover, as a representative of the schismatic Church, which destroyed ours in the past, you should be especially correct in your questions. And it's not clear how a kind word and support can harm Father Pavel? Yes, there are problems in our environment, and you again talk about it with sarcasm (not Christian). But would you deal with the problems of your environment or are you doing great?

Reply 0

Konstantin

10 years ago

And to the issue of prohibitions and prohibitions in the Romanian Metropolis. There, Metropolitan Leontiy takes compliance with church rules much more seriously. And if his power spread in Russia, many people would be deprived of their sans, would be banned and other punishments, starting with the first person in Moscow.

Reply 0

Archpriest John Mirolyubov

10 years ago

Konstantin, there is a certain common sense in your words, although there may be objections. You are still filled with emotions and triple punctuation marks. This makes the discussion difficult, it is not worth continuing. Everyone sees the situation and other people's moods, after all, from their own positions. Just excuse me, do you know that the leadership of your confession officially appealed to our leadership for recognition of the truth of its own clergy? And

we are dealing with this issue (including me) not on our own initiative. Sorry if I offended you. Only you would figure something out yourself.

Reply 0

Konstantin

10 years ago

God forgive me. Forgive me. There was no discussion as such. The management can go anywhere, it's their life, it's not connected practically with the life of parishioners. I, for example, don't need the recognition of our clergy by the schismatic church. I don't even understand the very essence of the issue and how it could have arisen. Maybe I got bored or I wanted to do politics, I don't know.

Reply 0

Archpriest John Mirolyubov

10 years ago

I hope you now understand that I didn't have any malicious intent. I was "delewn" a topic that was not initiated by my superiors at all.
Moreover, the issue could be discussed in private between the leaders, and it was given a p u b l i c h n y character. With our consent, but not on our initiative.

Reply 0

Konstantin

10 years ago

I didn't even try to find malicious intent in your question. It's just that in all the comments, except one, there was criticism, attacks and suspicion. Not highlighting someone specifically, it's not good. And it doesn't matter who is attacked, it's important to follow the rules. And about the intrigues you mentioned, it becomes disgusting, after all, the Church is Christian, things should be appropriate. Sorry.

Reply 0

Archpriest John Mirolyubov

10 years ago

"was there criticism, attacks and suspicions" in my words? There was a question of purely canonical content. It is just understandable, because it came from a person studying the attitude to canon law in the Russian Orthodox Church (and this attitude, to put it mildly, is very different from the law enforcement in the Russian Orthodox Church in many respects). I received the answer, including from Fr. Alexey Lopatina personally. I am satisfied and happy in this case for the RPSC. Who and how and what norms violated? And I didn't mention any intrigues. God forbid. For me, the norm is that I don't suspect my leadership of intrigues. As far as I'm informed, in relation to the Old Believers - for sure.

Reply 0

Konstantin

10 years ago

Do you see that your question can stir up inappropriate suspicions in immadened minds? And you understand it. And you could ask this question privately, in private. Surely you have such an opportunity. One more point - you study the attitude to canon law in the Russian Orthodox Church. Good. But Father Pavel is not the example to study. His case refers to the metropolis in Romania, and there is a completely different approach. It's not the RPSC. About intrigues. This is a problem of those who are engaged in them. Non-participation in them, in my opinion, is the best option for a person.

Reply 0

Archpriest John Mirolyubov

10 years ago

Good. We drove. Although I don't understand how it is possible to study at least from some side of the RPSC, if the Belokrinitsa Metropolis itself is put in brackets. Moreover, these brackets crawl to the surface in life. But I'll try to be more careful from now on.
Although it's not easy, the situation inside you is too complicated. You're singing that o. I didn't praise Pavel. Consider that you praised. An interesting and in many ways correct interview. But one day I publicly praised Metropolitan Cornelius. After that, some people came up to me and said with horror: How can you praise such a thing... Then others: Well, you "served", now the poor metropolitan will have to fight off your praise... In general, since then I try not to praise anyone in other denominations. Don't judge. And now I'll beware of asking questions.

Reply 0

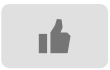
Konstantin

10 years ago

It's still interesting to communicate with you) Thank you for your answers!) Yes, that's how it turns out, unfortunately, there is a difference in our metropolitans, you know about it. And the situation is not so much complicated as it is incomprehensible, why all the same intrigues, speculations, claims and great-power arrogance on the part of Moscow? And some actions are not distinguished by the purity of the goal. I don't understand what we should share with them? There is no one closer.
I'm not sorry to you, this is a general remark, but I'm sorry if I offended you.

Our Metropolitan, I think, was not very saddened by your praise, he is asked questions without it, often uncomfortable) But, apparently, this is the fate of any leader and not only in the Church)

Reply



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