



# ST. ALEXANDER NEVSKY CATHEDRAL

Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

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## **Holy Trinity Seminary Graduation May 28, 2023 Commencement Address by Mitred Archpriest Serge Lukianov**

Your Eminence, Metropolitan Nicholas, Your Grace, Bishop Luke, Dean Nicholas,  
Graduating Class of 2023, Fathers, Brothers and Sisters:

It is a great honor for me to stand here before you today. It is hard to believe that 42 years ago I was sitting in the same hall at my seminary graduation. In 1981, at the main table were seated His Grace Bishop Laurus, Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky, the Inspector of Classes, Hieromonk Ioannicius, Dean Joseph Klar, and guest speaker Suzanne Massie, the author of the book Land of the Firebird. It was wonderful to see in the audience many of the founders of this holy monastery and seminary. For example, Archimandrites Panteleimon, Cyprian, Anthony, Serge and Vladimir, Abbots Flor, Job and Guri, Hieromonk Hilarion, the future Metropolitan, Hierodeacon Luke, the future abbot and bishop of this monastery, many monks and teachers, as well as my father, the late Protopresbyter Valery to whose memory this hall is dedicated.

The years that I spent at Holy Trinity Monastery and Seminary were, without a doubt, the best years of my life. On our first day, Bishop Laurus told us young seminarians that we had only three important concerns while here: prayer and services, obediences and study - in that order. Besides the usual obedience of working in the kitchen or the cow barn, Vladyka blessed me to work in the book binding department. A few months later, Vladyka assigned me to conduct the daily liturgies, Monday through Saturday. This was a wonderful experience for me, and from this obedience, Archimandrite Vladimir (Suhobok), who ran the monastery office, planted an idea in my heart to make an album of the Seminary/Monastery choir for the 50th anniversary of the founding of the monastery, which would take place in May of 1980. After receiving Bishop Laurus's blessing, and many choir rehearsals, we were able to make the first record ever recorded at the monastery. The recording was made at the Rostropovich Castle down the road from the monastery, where it was very quiet. Hieromonk Hilarion was blessed to be my spiritual father and the priest in charge of the recording. Our future Metropolitan had a beautiful baritone and also sang in our choir. For the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, 10,000 33 LP records were cut along with several thousand cassettes. The celebrations were led by Metropolitan Philaret and numerous ROCOR bishops, all of whom have since reposed in the Lord. I will always be grateful to Vladyka Laurus for bestowing on me the obedience of conducting on kliros and for producing this record.

All my life, I have been reaping from the seeds that were sown in my heart by this holy place. Since 1930, this monastery has been steeped in prayer by the numerous bishops and monks that have labored here. Truly, the grace of the Holy Spirit is in these walls and bestows itself upon all who live and study here. It is always easy to tell whether a priest or deacon is a “Jordanvilitis” – there is a certain approach to our priestly responsibilities that has been instilled in us by our time here. It is that “Jordanville Spirit” that has been guiding me for over 40 years as a clergyman, and I will always be grateful that my parents sent me here to receive my theology degree and my spiritual and liturgical foundation.

Dear graduating class of 2023, I pray that the “Jordanville Spirit” has also been embedded in your hearts, and no matter what road you take or in what capacity you serve the Church, may the education that you received here and the experiences that you had be a constant guide in your life.

In closing, I pray that God will grant you a “pastoral heart” full of compassion for every person you encounter. Ultimately, this is more important than any book learning. I’m extremely proud of my nephew Stephan and the entire “Diamond” graduating class and pray that God continues to bestow His grace upon you and your future endeavors serving Him, His Church and His people.