

# *Cuba recalls historic visit of Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill*

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Kirill and Raul at the Palace of the Revolution (Photo: Ismael Francisco)

Havana, Feb 14 (RHC) Cuba today recalls the visit of the Patriarch of Moscow and All of Russia, His Holiness Kirill, who held a historic meeting with Pope Francis in this capital.

Army General and at that time president of the Councils of State and Ministers, Raúl Castro, bid farewell on a day like today in 2016 to the religious leader, to whom days before he presented the José Martí Order, the highest decoration awarded by the Cuban State.

Raúl Castro was the first foreign leader with whom Kirill met after his appointment on February 1, 2009, a sign of the friendly ties that have been weaving between Cuba and the Patriarch of Moscow and All of Russia.

During his stay in Havana, His Holiness Kirill paid a courtesy visit to the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, and for a few hours, he spoke with Pope Francis, with whom he signed a joint declaration, the first since the occurrence of the great schism of Christianity in 1054.



This was Kirill's fourth visit to Cuba, although his first as Patriarch and his agenda also included a divine liturgy in the Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan and a tribute at the monument to the Soviet Internationalist Soldier.

Precisely the first stone of the Orthodox temple, of Byzantine style, was laid by Kirill in 2004, and later, during another visit to the Caribbean nation, he officiated the Divine Liturgy of its consecration as the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan.

The Orthodox community has been present in Cuba since the beginning of the 20th century and is made up of emigrants of Greek, Russian, and other Slavic origins.

On several occasions, the Orthodox leader highlighted the capacity of resistance and humanism of the Cuban Revolution and condemned the US blockade against the island.

His Holiness Kirill also received Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel during his visits to Moscow in 2019 and 2022. (Source: PL)

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