

Remains of Orthodox Saint to Reach International Space Station

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The International Space Station **Pixabay**

Part of the remains of Russia's most venerated saint, Saint Seraphim of Sarov, is to travel to the International Space Station (ISS), the TASS agency reported Wednesday.

The crew of ISS Expedition 50 will carry the relic when they blast off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on Sept. 23. The team, which includes NASA's Robert S. Kimbrough and Roscosmos's Andrey Borisenko and Sergei Ryzhikov, will be on board the ISS for 155 days.

After the relics are returned to Earth, they will be confined to a Russian Orthodox chapel in Zvyozdny Gorodok, or Star City, a space research and military installation near Moscow.

The remainder of the saint's relics are held in the reliquary of Diveyevo Monastery near Nizhny Novgorod. They have been at the site since 1991, when they rediscovered after decades of neglect in the officially-atheist Soviet era.

Seraphim of Sarov is one of the most renowned saints in the Eastern Orthodox Church. He died in 1833 and was canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1903.

It isn't the first time that the Russian Orthodox Church has sent saintly relics into space. Yuri Lonchakov, flight engineer for ISS Expedition 18, transported part of the remains of the revered Saint Sergius of Radonezh when he traveled to the ISS in 2008.

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