

Memory services for the souls of victims all over the Slavonia Diocese



Throughout the Diocese of Slavonia, memory prayer services for the killed by the Ustashas in 1942 were performed. Prayer gatherings took place in Kusunje, Japaga, Branesci, Dereza and Tornj.

On August 13, 1942, the Orthodox Serbs of the Slavonian town of Kusunje were taken by the Ustashas and brought into the church of St. Great Martyr George, from where most of the martyrs were taken to two nearby wells to be bestially killed and thrown into them. Several Serbs were imprisoned in the church itself, which was then burned down.

The prayerful remembrance of the suffering of the inhabitants of Kusunje began traditionally by a gathering at the monument in the center of the village, after which a procession was organized towards the wells, where, in honor of the

Resurrected Christ and the martyrs, wheat was consecrated. In the church of St. George the Great Martyr, in presence of the faithful people, priests and monastics, the Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Bishop Jovan of Pakrac-Slavonia.

On the feast-day of the Venerable Mother Angelina of Serbia, August 12, 2019, with the blessing of His Grace Bishop Jovan of Pakrac-Slavonia, a prayer service was offered in the village of Japaga near Pakrac for the repose of the souls of the victims of the village and the displaced civilians from the Kozara hills, who were martyred in that place in 1942 and their lifeless bodies were thrown into two village wells. On this occasion, the prayer service was officiated by the protopriest Djordje Teodorovic, parish priest of Pakrac, and protopriest-stavrohor Luka Bosanac.

On Sunday, August 11, 2019, on the feast of the Holy Martyr Chalinik and the Holy Martyr Seraphim, after the Holy Liturgy in the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Pakrac, with the blessing of Bishop Jovan of Pakrac-Slavonia, in the cemetery of the village of Braneska near Pakrac, a prayer was offered for the victims of the village and the displaced civilians from the Kozara region who were martyred and buried in the village cemetery on that day in 1942.

With the blessing of Bishop of Slavonia, on Sunday, August 4, 2019, a commemoration act was held in honour of sufferings of the people of Western Slavonia and Kozara region in August 1942. At the grave site in the village of Dereza over two wells – the site of the casualties of the inhabitants of that village, in the presence of the faithful people, prayer service was conducted for the victims by Very Rev. Archpriest Djordje Teodorovic, parish priest of Pakrac, and Archpriest Dragan Gaceša, parish priest. In his address to the gathering, priest Djordje Teodorovic recalled the suffering of the Serbian people in Dereza and stressed the importance of remembering their sufferings with their prayerful glorification.

After the memory service (panichida) at Dereza, at the foot of the church of St. Panteleimon the Great Martyr in Tornj, was performed for repose of the souls of the victims of the village, who were brought to the church of St. Panteleimon on August 4, 1924, and were taken by dusk to the site of death, where they were executed and buried.

- Source: Diocese of Slavonia & spc.rs