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800th anniversary of St. Elisha of Lavrishevo Monastery (+VIDEO)



On November 5, the St. Elisha of Lavrishevo Monastery in the Novogrudok Diocese of the Belarusian Orthodox Church celebrated its 800th anniversary, along with the 775th anniversary of the repose of St. Elisha of Lavrishevo. The festive services took place on the feast day of the monastery’s patron saint.

His Eminence Metropolitan Benjamin of Minsk and Zaslavsky presided over the Liturgy, concelebrated by twelve fellow Belarusian hierarchs and local and visiting clergy, reports the Belarusian Church.

During the services, the Metropolitan offered a prayer for the restoration of peace. Abbot Aristarchus delivered the sermon before Communion.

After the service, the local hierarch His Eminence Archbishop Gury of Novogrudok addressed those gathered, noting that the late Metropolitan Philaret, first

Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus, initiated the monastery's revival in modern times.

"This was a true hermitage, separated from the world by the Neman River. And you had to make considerable effort to get here. There were times when only one schema-abbot, Seraphim, was a resident of this monastery. But today—thanks be to God and to St. Elisha—the monastery is being revived and beautified. People can come here from all corners of our country and from abroad," he said.



Met. Benjamin was presented with an icon of St. Elisha of Lavrishevo.

In his archpastoral address, the Belarusian primate urged the abbot and monastic brotherhood to preserve the traditions of monasticism in Belarus and to be inspired by the example of St. Elisha's ascetic labor and selfless service. He encouraged them to provide an example of true Christian life for the many pilgrims who visit, particularly in modern times when temptations and renewed paganism trouble people's hearts.

His Eminence presented the monastery with an icon of the Kazan Mother of God and a facsimile edition of the Lavrishevo Gospel. His Grace Bishop Euseby of Drutsk, who served as abbot of the monastery from 2009 to 2022, received an icon of St. Elisha in gratitude for his labors.

The celebrations concluded with a procession around the monastery and hymns in honor of the patron saint. During the procession, a stop was made at the newly

erected chapel in honor of the Zhirovichi Icon of the Mother of God, which Met. Benjamin consecrated.



St. Elisha was the son of Lithuanian Prince Troinat and held a high position at the court of Grand Duke Mindaugas, founder of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. After his Baptism, Elisha grew weary of the habits of nobility, left his service, and went to a hermitage where he labored together with an Orthodox monk. Around 1225, they founded a monastery that later became a lavra.

St. Elisha met a martyr's death at the hands of a young demon-possessed novice, who was healed of his affliction upon touching the slain saint. He was canonized in 1514.

The Lavrishevo Monastery endured many hardships during the Uniate period and was almost completely devastated by the end of the 18th century before being rebuilt. The monastery was abolished in 1836. An attempt to revive it was made in the early 20th century, but during World War I the monastery church burned down. The relics of St. Elisha were lost and have not been found to this day.

In 1998, Bp. Gury of Novogrudok consecrated a church in honor of St. Elisha at the site where the monastery had previously been located. In 2001, a parish was registered at the church. By decision of the Holy Synod of the Belarusian Church on April 21, 2007, the parish was transformed into the St. Elisha of Lavrishevo Monastery.

Currently, the monastery grounds contain four churches. An alley of Orthodox shrines is being created along the perimeter of the monastery, planned to include 33 chapels representing the earthly years of Christ’s life. Fifteen chapels have been built to date.

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