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## **St. Justin Popović's will fulfilled with consecration of three-altar church at Ćelije Monastery**



A great event was held on Sunday at the Ćelije Monastery of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel in honor of several significant anniversaries in the life of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The Serbian Church has been celebrating the 800th anniversary of its autocephaly throughout the year, and it was nited on Sunday with the 125th anniversary of the birth and 40th anniversary of the repose of the great 20th-century dogmatician and ascetic St. Justin Popović, who labored at and is buried at Ćelije Monastery.

A new three-altar church was consecrated for the occasion, reports the official site of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

St. Justin had left a will for his disciples to publish his works and gather the proceeds in the St. John Chrysostom Fund towards erecting a church in honor of St.

Sava (central altar), St. Justin Martyr (southern altar), and St. Mary of Egypt (northern altar).

The design of the church was made by the architect Prof. Predrag Ristić, and the grounds were consecrated in 2007 with 12 hierarchs participating. Construction continued through this year, when the interior works were completed.

The consecration service and Divine Liturgy were celebrated by 11 hierarchs of the Serbian Church and His Eminence Archbishop Mark of Berlin of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. They were also joined by clergy from various dioceses, and the service was sung by students of the Prizren Seminary of Sts. Cyril and Methodius.

Many faithful from around the Orthodox world also filled the monastery to pray to God and honor St. Justin, who is loved by all Orthodox peoples. St. Justin's precious relics were transferred from the Archangel Michael chapel to the newly-consecrated cathedral during the services.

"This ceremony is a joy for the Diocese of Valjevo, the native diocese of Father Justin, for our Local Church, and for all who make up the Orthodox universe, because the oly Blessed Father Justin was not only a great Serbian, a priest and theologian of the Serbian Church, but also a pan-Orthodox luminary of the Christian universe," noted His Grace Bishop Irinej of Bačka.

"If there was a man in our lineage and in our time ... who listened intently to the call of Christ throughout his life and responded to Him with all his being, it was the holy Father Justin... Elder Justin knew that witnessing the love, justice, and truth of Christ was his eternal task," His Grace added.

"Fr. Justin was an apostle of his day, a walking, living Gospel, one who witnesses to it with all his being and spreads it around the world. If there is a fearless profession of faith, he is there. If there is suffering for the faith of Christ, he is there again. But he is best known in the world as a theologian, a great father and teacher of the Church of our time. He is a living example of an ascetic who theologizes and a theologian who labors ascetically. As Father Justin's words inspired God-seekers during his lifetime, so do his books today, and even more so his holy relics," Bp. Irinej continued, lauding the great saint.

A letter from His Holiness Patriarch Irinej, who was unable to attend the celebration, was also read out, in which he also hailed St. Justin as a universal saint.

The newly-founded Order of St. Justin was also presented as part of the

celebrations. Several of St. Justin's spiritual children were given the award, including His Eminence Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro, Abp. Mark of Berlin, and the head of Ćelije Monastery, Abbess Glyceria.

Afterwards, all were invited to an agape meal prepared by the Ćelije sisterhood, at which several people recalled their fond memories of St. Justin.

- Source: [spc.rs](http://spc.rs)