

A great jubilee of the Serbian Church celebrated in the monastery Podlastva



On the occasion of the jubilee of 800 years of the autocephaly of the Serbian Orthodox Church and 1500 years of the existence of the monastery of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary - Podlastva, His Holiness Serbian Patriarch Irinej officiated the Holy hierarchal Liturgy on September 28, 2019, and consecrated the chapel of the Holy Martyr Prince Lazarus of Serbia and monastery of that ancient Christian shrine.

His Eminence Archbishop of Cetinje and Metropolitan of Montenegro -Littoral Amfilohije, Bishops Athanasije of Mileseva, Joanikije of Budimlje-Niksic, Teodosije of Raška-Prizren, Joakim of Polog-Kumanovo, Sergije of Bihac-Pwtrovac, Metodije of Diocleia, retired Bishop Atanasije of Zaholm-Hercegovina as well as many clergymen and monastics concelebrated, in presence of thousands of the faithful.

Their Eminences Ambassador of the Russian Federation Mr. Vladislav Maslenikov, Ambassador of Serbia Prof. Zoran Bingulac, PhD, and Consul of Serbia in

Montenegro Zoran Dojcinovic, representatives of the municipal authorities of Budva and Herceg Novi with mayors Marko Carevic and Stevan Katic, numerous country and regional guests attended the festal Liturgy.

“This is a great day in our history. A great day before God and all our glorious ancestors who lived in these areas where you and we live today, and in other areas of our sacred land of Serbia and other Serbian lands. We are here today in great numbers, and what a blessing it would be if we would celebrate all our great feasts by glorifying God and looking into the face of each of us as the face of our physical brother, as born in likeness and image of God, because every man is an icon of God, ” His Holiness Patriarch Serbian Mr. Irinej said and added:

“ Many want to see the One who created this world, but let’s just look at each other and shall see the likeness of God. In each of us the Lord has implanted His icon and character, not only in us Orthodox, but in every human being. All humans are creatures of God, regardless of skin color, nation, culture, and a degree of cultural education. We are all children of God, created by His own hands.

Today is a glorious day, blessed by God. Eight centuries ago our Church received significant recognition, a major role among the local Churches – it became autocephalous, equal to all other great Orthodox Churches, such as the Churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople ... This great deed was accomplished by Saint Sava, the greatest figure in our history and in the Serbian Orthodox Church.”

“The will of God was that Saint Sava had a wise father, Saint Simeon – Nemanja,” said the Patriarch, expressing his deep belief that Sava’s departure to Mount Athos gave us in him a great spiritual man of wisdom, a great personality of our history. The Patriarch emphasized that Sava and his father Nemanja had known that without an independent Church there could be no independent state, and that they had laid a foundation on which our Church and state exist still today:

“It is a historical fact that the autocephality of our Church made an autocephalous state as well. Thanks to that gift of God, we were able to survive the terrible Middle Ages under Turkish slavery, that lasted several hundred years. If the Church had not accepted the role of the state when the state disappeared, we would not exist today.”

The Patriarch reminds us that we have experienced and have been experiencing great temptations, and many who have feared of our power and role and glory in history have endeavored to fulfill the old Roman rule: Divide and rule.

“Unfortunately, we have succumbed to this temptation in our time, as we have

allowed others to divide us and separate us from each other, and hence we have been experiencing great temptations today. However, since we have a spiritual foundation, we have an abundant grace of God as well, because today, when we are gathered here, brothers and sisters, many God pleasing personalities of our origin are standing before God's throne, mediating for us, and consequently, they will never leave us," the Patriarch underlined.

His Holiness the Patriarch gave advice that we should preserve what is essential in our history, in our Church and culture. It is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is power, it is might, it is strength. The Lord established the Church and rewarded the Holy Apostles with the greatest gifts, the divine blessings, who, as illiterate people, founded the Church of Christ, which has since existed and continues to play an apostolic role both in our people and in the whole world."

The Patriarch called upon the Serbian people not to abandon their hearths, because in foreign countries, many people may lose their identity, their faith, and, say, after ten years they forget who they belong to:

"The Lord will not allow us to disappear from the face of the earth. Everything we need has been given to us. That is why I call upon all you present, and I hope that this appeal concerns our country and fatherland, but also the countries where our people live: Let us not leave our blessed land, for its greatest sons contributed to its success and progress, laid the foundations that are not temporal. Let's not leave our homeland. Our culture and history stand on solid foundations that do not change from today to tomorrow," concluded Patriarch Irinej.

Bishop Methodije of Diocleia baptized a servant of God Dusan, who was anointed by Patriarch Irinej, in the early Christian baptistery of the 7th century, located between the church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin and monastery buildings. On this occasion, Metropolitan Amfilohije said:

"This baptistery, even after fifteen centuries, is again giving birth and will give birth to new Christians. It has already been restored and used. May God bless Dusan, because according to tradition, Emperor Dusan rebuilt this monastery in 1350, so here Dusan is baptized in that baptistery that was restored at that time. This service of God continues for fifteen centuries. Today, our little Dusan was baptized in that baptistery in which baptisms have been performed almost since apostolic times, and kept in this holy place, and this holy work of the Church of God...

Bishop said that there were no Greek, no Jew, no slave or free man, male or female,

Chinese or American, neither Serb nor Montenegrin, nor Croat or any other in the Church:

“It is the Church of God in which they are one and together called to be both in time and in eternity. This is the blessing we have received from the ancient Apostles, from the Holy Slavonic Brothers Cyril and Methodius, Naum and Kliment, from the Holy Father of ours Sava – the founder of this holy Church, and then going to our time, to St. Basil of Ostrog, St. Peter of Cetinje, to St. hieromartyr Metropolitan of Montenegro Joanikije with the clergy who suffered martyr’s death with him and to other new martyrs.”

The hierarch reminded that eighty innocent young men from Grbalj, Pashtrovici, Pobor and Maine had been killed in Podlastva, murdered in those ungodly times by the brotherly arm.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy several personalities were awarded the Order of St. Sava, handed in by the Patriarch Irinej himself.

- Source: Metropolitanate of Montenegro-Littoral & spc.rs