

The feast day of Saint Sebastian of Jackson was liturgically celebrated at Saint Sava Church in Jackson, northern California



The feast day of Saint Sebastian of Jackson was liturgically celebrated at Saint Sava Church in Jackson, northern California, on Saturday, November 30/17, 2019. This parish, the oldest one of the Serbian Orthodox Church in America, built in 1894, is the home of its founder's relics.

This gathering was presided by Bishop Maxim of Western America and concelebrated by the clergy from Jackson, Sonora, Sacramento and San Francisco, as well as from the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral: the Dean of the Seminary in Cetinje, Fr. Gojko Perovic, and the priest of the parish in Podi and Sasovici, Herceg Novi, Fr. Aleksandar Papic.

While Saint Sebastian was the first American-born Orthodox Christian monk and priest and an apostle and enlightener of America, his parents came to America in 1853 from the village of Sasovici in the Bay of Kotor. According to Saint Nikolai of

Ohrid and Žiča, Saint Sebastian visited this beautiful coastal place only a few days before his blessed repose in Žiča Monastery. Fr. Aleksandar with his parishioners, including the members of Saint Sebastian Dabovic's family, prepared and brought with them a very special gift for Jackson's parish – a beautiful white cross, hand-made out of stone and picked at Sebastian's family property in Sasovici. The cross will stay inside the reliquary to be venerated together with Saint Sebastian's holy relics. On the other side, the mayor of the city of Jackson, Mr. Bob Stimpson, presented Fr. Aleksandar with a Jackson City Council's proclamation of the intention to establish a sister-city relationship with the city of Herceg Novi (which Sasovići belong to), upon recommendation of Saint Sava Church in its 125th year of existence. Fr. Alexander will present the proclamation to the city authorities of Herceg Novi for further procedure. In addition, Fr. Gojko presented to Bishop Maxim a beautiful icon of Saint Peter of Cetinje, as a blessing from Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral for Saint Sava Church in Jackson.

Saint Sava parish in Jackson is mostly comprised of the descendants of the immigrants from the Bay of Kotor, Herzegovina and Montenegro, who came to work in the local gold mines. However, there are also members from other ethnic groups, including the growing number of Americans who were not raised in Orthodox Christian families, but who chose to become Orthodox Christians in their adult years. On Saint Sebastian Day there were many guests – pilgrims from the entire northern Californian region, especially the Russian speaking faithful.

The festivities in Jackson started on Friday evening with Great Vespers and blessing and breaking of five loaves of bread, followed by dinner and program. Bishop Maxim presided at the Divine Liturgy on Saturday morning and gave a sermon, theologically and practically elaborating on the Gospel reading about carrying the easy yoke and light burden of Christ in our every-day lives. At the end of the service, he expressed great joy to all the guests who came, especially those from afar. Fr. Gojko addressed the people in the fellowship hall during the meal extending the prayerful greetings of Metropolitan Amfilohije and the faithful of the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral.

In the afternoon, Bishop Maxim went to Anderson, California, where he served on Sunday morning, while Jackson's parish clergy served with Fr. Aleksandar on the so-called Parish Founders' Sunday. It was commemorated even before Saint Sebastian was glorified as a saint on the first Sunday in December, since the church was consecrated on the feast day of the Entrance of the Mother of God. The service was followed by the traditional Bokescki Bakalar luncheon and wonderful fellowship. The dear guests from Boka were given a farewell with great gratitude and hope

that a group of the faithful from Jackson will be able to visit Sasovići and other significant and holy places in the Bay of Kotor and the rest of Montenegro in the near future. Our holy father Sebastian of Jackson continues to connect and gather distant and sometimes seemingly unrelated souls, so that we may learn from each other and that we may truly be one in Christ, abiding in love and unity.

— Source: Western American Diocese & spc.rs