

Cononcal visit of His Grace Bishop Irinej



December is the month in which Florida is known for its sunny weather. It is precisely in this month, that we honor our soul and body with fasting and prayer, as we prepare for the birth of the Divine Child, Jesus Christ.

During these blessed days, His Grace Irinej brought great joy to our parish by celebrating the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Sunday, December 15, 2019. He enriched us with his divinely inspired words, by pointing out during his homily, that only the one who is enriched with God is truly a rich person, both here on earth as in the kingdom of Heaven!

The faithful people gathered in significant numbers to greet their Archpastor before the Liturgy, wishing him a heartfelt welcome and receiving the blessings of His Grace!

Bishop Irinej was the main celebrant at the divine Liturgy, joined in concelebration by the Protopresbyter-Stavrophor Uros Ocokoljich, Economos Aleksandar Djurdjevic and Protodeacon Dr. Jovan Anicic. During the Holy Liturgy, Reader Jovan Djurich assisted in the altar, while the Epistle was read by Anastasia Djurdjevic.

The chanting of responses were rendered by the Heroine Milunka Savich Choir, led by Anastasia Djurdjevic. The choir, with its harmonious and pleasant voices, contributed to the liturgical offering, such that it would truly be an encounter with our Lord Jesus Christ and that, in the joy of the Holy Spirit and our Heavenly Father!

The people of God approached and filled out the liturgical space to the joy of our Saint Sava Parish in North Port. Both old and young alike came. The people of this region, from Bradenton to Naples, came to take part in liturgical oneness, by receiving the Holy Mysteries and the blessing of the Bishop Irinej.

Following the Liturgy, Bishop Irinej anointed those present with holy myrrh from the miraculous icon of the Mother of God of Hawaii and distributed icons to the gathered people.

The Agape Meal (of Love) immediately followed, which was deliciously prepared by the St. Petka Circle of Serbian Sisters with much love.

Then there was a short break, wherein everyone went to the church, to see the interior which was being adorned, and that Bishop Irinej could see on the spot the progress of the beautification of our church.

The Bishop's words, which he shared with us on this occasion, were: "You have one of the most beautiful churches in America, if not the most beautiful. For the way in which you are adorning it is truly unique, one of a kind!"

With the blessings of His Grace Bishop Irinej, the time came for the Invocation of the Holy Spirit in order to begin the annual assembly.

Along with the annual reports and recollections of the previous assembly, the most important was reference made on the completion of the interior of the church, and readying of the liturgical space for Divine worship. We were reminded of the great contribution that was made by academic sculptor Zoran Vasiljkovic.

Zoran built himself into our parish not only with his personal qualities, but also through the work of his hands in carving the iconostasis and holy table, providing the conceptual design for the production of chandeliers (polyelea) and floors in the church, as well as producing three medallions in the opus sectile technique, which

will adorn our church.

Substantially contributing in all, by helping bring the works to completion, is the former church board president in North Port, Miroslav Djurich, who works hard on setting and installing the decorative floor in the church. He is greatly assisted in everything by our priest, Fr. Sasa Djurdjevic.

In addition to this, by building in the church, the former president Dragan Jovanovic, has also built himself into the very church by installing electricity, setting the interior doors and erecting the iconostasis and the holy altar table, and hanging the polyelea.

Finally, the time came for the election of the president and members of the new Church Board.

In addition to the members in good standing, there were about a hundred parishioners in attendance. Bishop Irinej allowed everyone to be present and in this way to contribute to the development of the parish community.

Through the great effort and by the blessing of our Bishop, who evangelically invited us to carry our Cross with dignity, the assembly flowed in Christian spirit. Finally, to the joy of our parish, a new president and then, members of the new Church Board were elected.

Diana Dukich Sober was elected as president of the Church Board! Diana was born in Rochester, Pennsylvania. She was an active parishioner of St. Elijah's Church in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, where she attended church school and was married to her husband Leo Sober. For a period of time she was an active member of the choir of the St. George Church in Midland, Pennsylvania.

She is a graduate of Point Park University in Pittsburgh, PA. She worked as a project engineer at the Beaver Valley Nuclear Power Plant in Shippingport, Pennsylvania.

She moved to North Port, Florida in 2010 and immediately took an active part in St. Sava Church. Diana was the financial secretary of the Church Board for seven years. Diana is a regular and active participant at Divine Liturgy and sings in the Heroine Milunka Savich Choir. Quite often she helps the sisters in the kitchen.

We owe great debt of gratitude for the survival and prosperity of our parish and
to His Grace Bishop Basil for his presence here to bestow his holy blessings by serving
words of comfort and support for us to
to arrive safely in the joy of the Risen Lord!



















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