

Georgian Church has grown from 30 to 2,000 churches under Patriarch Ilia (VIDEO)



December 25 marked 41 years since the enthronement of His Holiness Ilia II as the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia in 1977 at the age of 44, under whose guidance, the Georgian Church has grown immensely.

The festive service in honor of His Holiness' anniversary was held at Svetitskhoveli Cathedral in the ancient Georgian capital of Mtskheta, reports Kavkaz Online.

The members of the Georgian Holy Synod participated in the service together with

the greatly-revered Pat. Ilia, and President Salome Zurbashvili and Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze were in attendance. In his congratulatory speech, the Prime Minister noted the great accomplishments of Pat. Ilia.

“I want to congratulate all Orthodox—today is the 41st year since the enthronement of the Patriarch of Georgia,” he said. “During this period, very many monasteries and churches were built, restored, and rebuilt. This is indeed an unprecedented period of revival in the history of Georgia. I want to thank the Patriarch with great respect for the contribution he makes to the formation of the Georgian state.”

As Kavkaz Online reports, at the time of Pat. Ilia’s enthronement, there were 15 dioceses and only 30 active churches left thanks to communist persecutions. Today there are 47 dioceses and about 2,000 active parishes, as well as about 3,000 clergy.

Pat. Ilia celebrated the 55th anniversary of his consecration as a bishop in August of this year as well. He is known to be the most trusted and loved man in Georgia. A 2015 National Democratic Institute poll showed that he enjoyed an 87% approval rating.