

Serbian Bishop Antonije awarded with the Medal of St. Mark of Ephesus



The Serbian Orthodox Bishop Antonije of Moravica was awarded with the highest decoration of the Department of Foreign Church Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church – the medal of St. Mark of Ephesus I degree.

On Sunday, July 12, 2020, on the feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul – the church feast of the Representation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Moscow, His Eminence Hilarion, Metropolitan of Volokolamsk, President of the Department of Foreign Church Affairs of the Patriarchate of Moscow, presented to His Grace Antonije, Bishop of Moravica and dean of the Representation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Moscow, the highest decoration of that Department – the medal of St. Mark of Ephesus I degree.

The award ceremony was held during the celebration of St. Peter's Day, the church feast of the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul – the Representation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Moscow.

His Eminence Hilarion, Metropolitan of Volokolamsk, addressed to His Grace Anthonije the following words:

– Your Grace, dear Bishop! I cordially congratulate you on your jubilee. A significant

part of Your Grace's life has been connected with the Russian Orthodox Church, which has found in your person a worthy envoy of the Church of Saint Sava. During all these years, living with us, you have been and remain a good and sincere friend, beloved by many believers of our Church.

From the walls of the ancient monastery of the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh you have brought a deep and sincere love for the liturgical tradition of the Russian Church, the Russian language and culture. All the knowledge you acquired during your studies at the Moscow Theological Academy has helped you to fulfill the responsible duty as the dean of the reestablished Representation of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Moscow. You have managed to renew all those glorious traditional Russian-Serbian relations that were established in the time before the outbreak of the Revolution. The paternal spiritual care for the Serbian diaspora on the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate, as well as the tireless efforts of Your Eminence aimed at the comprehensive development of relations between the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches, have written new pages in the common history of our two Orthodox peoples.

The love for the beauty of the church and "zeal for the house of the Lord" (Ps 68:10) inspired you to sacrifice your efforts in order to enhance the beauty of the church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, while great pastoral qualities helped you to gather a large spiritual community.

Thanks to your translation and author's work, we have been lucky enough to get acquainted with spiritual values of the Orthodox Serbian people. On the other hand, Russian theology and the saints of our Church have become closer to the Serbian people, who – getting acquainted with the Russian spiritual culture – can feel more clearly the words of the Venerable Ava Justin, who says: "It is a huge, wonderful and infinite paradise of the Russian soul, the miraculous and infinite holiness of the glorious saints of the Russian lands" (Venerable Justin of Celije, On the Paradise of the Russian Soul). You have done a lot when it comes to preserving and improving the ancient tradition of educating Serbian students in Russian theological schools, Venerable Simeon of Dajbabe and Venerable Sebastian of Jackson, St. Nicholas of Ohrid and Zica and St. Mardarije Uskokovic, but also many other Serbian saints who were educated in Russia.

Your Grace, on the day of your 50th anniversary, I wish you good health and the abundant help of God in your ascetic, archpastoral and church-diplomatic service. In recognition of all your successes, I consider you worthy to present you with this high award of the Department of Foreign Church Affairs of the Moscow Patriarchate – the medal of St. Mark of Ephesus of the First Degree. For many and fruitful years,

beloved Bishop!”

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