

## **Metropolitan Amfilohije buried in the Cathedral church in Podgorica**



***Earthly remains of Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral were buried in the crypt of the Cathedral church of the Resurrection of Christ in Podgorica, on November 1, 2020.***

The Holy Hierarchal Liturgy with the funeral rite was celebrated by His Holiness Irinej, Serbian Patriarch, with concelebration of Their Eminences Metropolitans Anthony of Borispol and Brovar (Ukrainian Orthodox Church), Andon of Elbasan (Albanian Orthodox Church) and Porfirije of Zagreb-Ljubljana; Their Graces Bishops: Joanikije of Budimlye-Niksic and Administrator of the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral; Irinej of Backa, Jovan of Sumadija, Atanasije of Milesevo, Grigorije of Dusseldorf and Germany, Joakim of Polog-Kumanovo, Teodosije of Raska-Prizren, David of Krusevac, Jovan of Slavonia, Sergije of Bihac-Petrovac, Ilarion of Timok, Arsenije of Nis, Dimitrije of Zaholm-Herzegovina, Stefan of Remesiana, Metodije of Dioclea and Bishop Emeritus Atanasije of Zaholm-Herzegovina, numerous priests and hieromonks of the Serbian Orthodox Church

and some other local Orthodox Churches, in a prayerful participation of thousands of the faithful.

Among those who attended the funeral there were: President of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Aleksandar Vucic with a high delegation of the Government of Serbia; Serbian member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Mr. Milorad Dodik; mandatory for the composition of the new Government of Montenegro, Mr. Zdravko Krivokapic; president of the Parliament of Montenegro Mr. Aleksa Becic, a large number of deputies in the Parliament of Montenegro, political leaders, representatives and high officials of all Montenegrin cities and municipalities, diplomatic representatives of foreign countries, as well as representatives of cultural institutions of Montenegro and of some countries of the region.

A high delegation was also present on behalf of the Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, as well as very high representatives of all religious communities of Montenegro and many other respected personalities from all the spheres of society. Dr. Jelena Bojovic Borovinic, head of the Department of Pulmonology of the Clinical Center of Montenegro, who had treated Metropolitan Amfilohije, was also present.

**Bishop Irinej of Backa**, in his liturgical sermon held after the Gospel reading about the sower and the seeds, says that, in addition to the sorrow over the parting with the Metropolitan, our joy is even greater because we know that the parting is temporary.

“With the blessing of His Holiness, our Patriarch, and with the consent of the current administrator of the God-protected Metropolitanate, I will address you with a few words on this sad and at the same time joyful day, as it is more joyful than sad. It is sad, of course, because we are parting with our Hierarch Amfilohije of blessed memory, who worked all his life long for the sake of love of Christ, for the glory of God, for His Holy Church, and who spent the longest period of his life right here in Montenegro, as Archpastor of the people of God”, said Bishop of Backa.

“We hope that we will not only one day meet, but also that by the grace of the Lord it will be in the arms of Abraham, and above all in the arms of the Heavenly Father, in communion with all the saints, in the communion of the Church we call Heavenly and that begins already here and now, on earth, because it is One Church. Not only because of that, we can, in addition to grief, have joy in our hearts at this hour because it is probably not accidental, just as there is nothing accidental in history, nor in our individual lives, but it is by God’s providence, as a lesson and message to all to us, that the blessed Bishop reposed on the eve of the monastery’s Patron

Saint-day, on the eve of the feast of St. Peter of Cetinje, that his body was exposed to the people of God for saying farewell and venerating on the very feast of the monastery, and that today his earthly body is surrendered to the earth and his soul is being directed along the blessed path to the Lord just on the day of the Resurrection of Christ, because every Sunday during the year is the feast of the Resurrection of Christ, and in this Church of the Resurrection of Christ, that is unique in many ways in our people in all the areas where they live,” said Bishop Irinej and reminded that Metropolitan Amfilohije already in his childhood, as a boy from Moraca area – which was an exception in the time of atheism – had accepted Christ with all his heart.

He added that it was not true that the Metropolitan had died from the virus, as he had been fighting against that virus for 11 days, but that “his organism and physical weakness did not withstand that temptation.” Bishop Irinej said that the life motto of Metropolitan Amfilohije was “Everything for Christ, and Christ for nothing” and added that speaking about the Metropolitan like this, he did not want to create a cult of a personality, nor did Metropolitan Amfilohije had been striving for that.

### **Funeral rite in front of the Cathedral**

After the Liturgy, the coffin with the Metropolitan’s body was taken out of the church, and the funeral rite was performed in front of the church.

### ***His Holiness’s funeral address***

His Holiness Patriarch Irinej said in his farewell sermon that Metropolitan Amfilohije had reposed in the Lord at the moment when he had been most needed by the Church and the people.

“The *modus vivendi* and bearer of spiritual and every other renewal in Montenegro was our beloved Metropolitan Amfilohije of blessed memory, supported by the clergy, monastics and the faithful people of Montenegro.” That is why his name as a respectable person will be written in golden letters in Serbian history. He is among the greatest Serbian theologians of our time; as such he is appreciated and respected in the global Orthodoxy. With his theological and literary works he belongs to the constellation of greatest theologians of our time. As a representative of our Church, he participated in numerous meetings, symposia and gatherings both in Orthodox countries and abroad. Therefore, information on his death has quickly reached all the local Orthodox Churches, from which we receive their condolences.

With his repose the blessed Metropolitan has left a great void in the life of our Church, and especially relating to the solution of some problems of the Church here in Montenegro. He left at a time when his presence was mostly needed by the Church and the people. We hope that with his prayers before the Throne of God the present situation in Montenegro will be resolved in the best and most promising way for the Church, both for the Serbs and for other peoples in Montenegro.

Saint Peter of Cetinje, Saint Basil of Ostrog and other Serbian saints and enlighteners will definitely support him in that. The faithful Serbian people in Montenegro have to observe the sublime example and teachings of their blessed Metropolitan, to build and preserve unity in faith, in love and devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ, brotherly love and commitment to their fatherland and people,” His Holiness said.

***President of the Parliament of Montenegro Mr. Aleksa Becic*** says that today we are saying farewell to one of the greatest spiritual fathers and theologians of this time.

“I hope that you will be the last Bishop who had to defend the Church from a part of your people, and you had defended and saved it by forgiving everyone in advance. And if you had not done that, there would be no Montenegrin who wouldn’t resent you, and it’s not because you fostered holiness inside yourself. You knew that because you yourself, as a son of Moraca, were frank in expression and gentle in action. Only great and immortals can defend in that way, and take nothing; do so much, and grant everything; build so much, and give everything as a gift. That ethics of yours is based not only on Gospel principles, but also on the idea of a necessity of just laws, is symbolically shown by the fact that in a representative, scientific work presented at a scientific gathering you brought deep

thoughts of your predecessor Peter the Great, as a peacemaker and law-giver, in connection with the prophet and law-giver Moses from the Old Testament. It is especially impressive with what depth you notice and emphasize the fact that the General Montenegrin and Mount Code has as many articles as many years Christ lived on Earth, Whom on the throne of Metropolitans of Cetinje your predecessor, Metropolitan Peter the First, served as well. Both of you, next to taking care of spiritual life of the people, worried greatly about the laws that should ensure brotherly harmony and peace in the society,” president of the Montenegrin Parliament Becic said.

The mandatory for the composition of the new Government of Montenegro, **Mr. Zdravko Krivokapic** said that today was a procession of all previous processions combined from all over, and that even today that common procession was led by nobody else than by “our beloved Metropolitan”.

“Look once more at your people, dear Metropolitan! The Holy Bishop taught that by deeds we can grow spiritually towards Heaven. Guided by the sober wisdom of God, he perfected sacred virtues directed towards all that is eternal and divine. He testified that only two things are preconditions: honesty and truth, and that is why his words resonated loudly and was heard far and wide. Although you resurrected Montenegro, you experienced that you suffered hardships and torments for the sake of the Lord, and that from your own people, knowing that in this way you become closer to God. I guess that it is the destiny of the Throne of Saint Peter of Cetinje,” said Krivokapic.

**Bishop Emeritus Atanasije of Zaholm-Herzegovina** read the letter, i.e. last message of “Milutin Popadic from occupied Kosovo”:

*Forgive me, Bishop, I will call you Elder. I am writing to you from Kosovo – I want to stay there. Whenever it was difficult for you to arrive first, you gave bread to the hungry, to the bleeding wounded.*

*You carried the bones of the killed Serbs on your hands – God grant rest to their souls. You may remember me, it wasn't long ago, you stood in front of a Serbian, Orthodox child. I look at you, and Shiptar threatens us: “Every Serb will die now”. And you, Elder, say, do you know who is defending you, the guardian of the Pec Throne is on your side.*

*My dearest bishop hugs me with his hand, I will honestly admit – that encourages me. And he wipes out my tears from my face with his cassock. Kosovo will only be betrayed by a coward. Bishop and Elder, let me say this: the crucified Kosovo is praying for you.*

Bishop Atanasije also read messages that arrived from Mount Athos, where the monks chanted three troparia composed for the Metropolitan, as well as from Bishop Maxim from California.

**Academician Matija Beckovic** reminded what he had said to Metropolitan Amfilohije in 1990 during his enthronement in Cetinje.

“ I told him that if he wanted to be holy, there was no better place on earth for such an opportunity. They say that God keeps everyone on earth until he does what he was born up to do, so the Lord called him at the right time; if it had been earlier, it would not have been good. Called up to heaven, where he will be able to do more for his people and the Church than to remain on earth. The re-born Montenegro starts from A, that is why death has not fallen easier on anyone than on him, that is why he is so blissful and calm in the coffin, that is why we are crying, but he and Heaven are rejoicing. As Saint George once killed a dragon, so Amfilohije won the coronavirus, not only as a disease, but also as a virus of brotherly hatred,” said, among other things, poet Matija Beckovic.

Addressing, as he said, the Amfilohije’s Assembly, **the Bishop Joanikije of Budimlje-Niksic**, said that Metropolitan Amfilohije was a man of Christ, a man of Christ’s Golgotha and Christ’s Resurrection.

“And his theology is the theology of Resurrection. And his word is a bright word that enlightens thoughts and minds and feelings and ennobles human souls, and it is all because he has relied on and united with the God of love, and he has poured out that love into this world with both his prayer and his word. His sacrifice for the Church and for Christ, for the truth and justice of God, enabled him to know the mystery of Kosovo and Metohija as the mystery of the Serbian Golgotha. The same applies to Jasenovac and Montenegro. And he revealed that the Kosovo Covenant and the Mystery of Kosovo were imprinted in Montenegro. And when he thundered loudly from this place: “We will not give up the shrines!”, it meant: “We will not give up Ostrog, we will not give up Decani, we will not give up the Cetinje monastery, we will not give up the Patriarchate, Gracanica, Devic and Moraca!”. Bishop Joanikije added that our Metropolitan could say today: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”

“And how did he fight that war?” By the strongest weapon! By God’s truth and justice, but also by love, and prayer, and patience, and forgiveness! That is why he has won every battle to this day, and his death has sealed all his victories to this day. That is why we experience his death, his blessed repose as a victory. It is a great sorrow, but it is such sorrow that, by the God’s grace, will turn it into joy, not only of the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral, but, we are convinced, much wider, and will comfort all those who are crying today while parting with Metropolitan Amfilohije throughout the Orthodox universe”, the Bishop said.

After the sermon of Bishop Joanikije, the coffin with Metropolitan’s body was carried around the church accompanied by ringing of bells, and Metropolitan’s body was laid in the tomb in the crypt of the Cathedral.

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On the occasion of the death of Bishop Amfilohije, the Church has received numerous telegrams of condolences from all over the world. Almost all domestic and world media reported with the deepest respect on the death and life of Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral pointing out that he was one of the most important theologians and personalities in the Serbian Orthodox Church and global Orthodoxy.

Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral reposed in the Lord on Friday, October 30, 2020. Since October 6, he had spent in the Clinical Center of Montenegro for medical treatment, rejecting several offers to be treated in other countries, explaining that he thought that it was normal to be treated exactly

where his people, who are entrusted to him as archbishop, are being treated.

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