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Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America: Metropolitan Joseph's Condolence Letter upon the Repose of His Holiness Patriarch Irinej



November 20, 2020

His Grace the Right Reverend Bishop LONGIN

His Grace the Right Reverend Bishop MAXIM

His Grace the Right Reverend Bishop IRINEJ

His Grace the Right Reverend MITROPHAN

Beloved Brothers and Concelebrants,

It is with great sadness but with hope in the Resurrection that we learned early this

morning of the repose of His Holiness Patriarch +IRINEJ of thrice-blessed memory. While we are momentarily saddened by the passing into eternal life of a father, great luminary and spiritual leader of the Orthodox world, we are comforted in the assurance of his place in the Heavenly Kingdom and rejoice in knowing that we now have a new intercessor on our behalf before the Lord.

His life and ministry in God's Holy Church were a testament to truth and justice. With a compassionate heart, tender spirit but ferocious courage, he comforted the faithful of Serbia and in particular those who are and continue to be oppressed, suffering daily in Kosovo and Metohija. His Godly manner of leadership following his predecessor, His Holiness Patriarch +PAVLE, seemed an unsurmountable task to accomplish in the beginning, but he did so with grace, dignity, patience and hope. His years as Patriarch of the suffering Serbian Orthodox Church will leave an indelible mark in the history of a suffering faith in the 21st century.

My personal recollections and memories of him will be those of deep-seated hospitality, fondness and gratitude. In 2013 and 2018 he unselfishly shared his time and the unknown treasures of Orthodox Serbia opening every door and offering us precious opportunities to visit irreplaceable monasteries and venerate the sweet relics of living Serbian saints. His love for Christ permeated his being as was reflected in the radiant glow of his countenance.

With the painful timing of his repose so close to that of Metropolitan +AMFILOHIJE, we beseech our dear Lord for his mercy upon us and upon all those who are suffering. We pray in our mutual sorrow and lift up our unworthy prayers to the One who will receive these God-pleasers who now celebrate the eternal heavenly liturgy in the presence of the All-Holy Trinity. We beseech our Most Holy Theotokos and all the saints to intercede before our merciful Lord, to end our sorrows and save our people from further pain and suffering and to strengthen and preserve in perfection the Serbian Orthodox Church.

On behalf of my brother hierarchs, the clergy, Archdiocese Board of Trustees, and of all the faithful, accept our most sincere prayers and condolences to you and to the Serbian nation.

Memory Eternal! Christ is Risen!

Your Brother in Christ,

+JOSEPH

Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

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