

Serbian Orthodox Church - Metropolinate of Australia and New Zealand: Archiepiscopal Liturgy in the church of Holy Trinity, Brunswick



His Grace Bishop Siluan of Australia and New Zealand has served the Archiepiscopal Liturgy on Sunday 6 December, in the church of Holy Trinity, Brunswick. The Bishop's arrival in our temple was part of his canonical visit to Melbourne Deanery, after prolonged isolation due to coronavirus pandemic.

The faithful flock has gathered to greet their Vladika, who arrived together with his Chancellor Ad Interim, Very Rev Fr Archimandrite Petar Radulovic, abbot of St Sava Monastery in Hall, Canberra.

His Grace Bishop Siluan served with Archimandrite Petar, Protopresbyter-Stavrophor Milorad Loncar, Protopresbyter-Stavrophor Petar Damnjanovic, renowned iconographer and Archdeacon Miodrag Tomic and Deacon Nenad Vujasinovic. They were helped with acolytes Ilija Perac, Ognjen Stevanovic, Bratislav Kuribak, Milos Stevanovic, Gojko Pavic, Savo Nisic and Nikola Stambolija.

The heart-warming singing of church choir, lead by our conductor Sava Djukic, has ascended us into mystical and personal encounter with our Lord in this Liturgical gathering. This attendance, after several months of church closures in Victoria,

represented one of most important recent events in the spiritual life of our church and parish.

A positive change could be seen; the faces of the faithful manifested an optimism for the future. A relief from the recent extraordinary spiritual curtailment – which is, we hope, squarely now in the past – was evident.

In his liturgical homily, Vladika has offered us inspired observations on the disproportionate restrictions in Melbourne during the pandemic, and importance of the Holy Mysteries in the spiritual life of the Orthodox Christians. Here are some excerpts from His Grace's sermon:

A man separated from God and his neighbour lives in contradiction with what has been given to him, because he bears in himself the vertical of communion with God, and the horizontal of community with others. That has been denied to you, the faithful of this land, by closing of the holy temples.

Brothers and sisters, what nourishes us, makes us. This is what Evangelical parable tells us today. Who sows in the corporal, the earthly, will reap the temporal, the corruption and death. The man is not just the earth, the man needs heaven, the presence of God and His Grace. While preserving the corporal, how many souls have been damaged in the city of Melbourne? How many people have been crushed mentally and in spirit?

But it was possible to still respect one, and not disregard the other. We requested from the state to be reasonable and accept that the role of the Church is not marginal in the society; to allow that we still gather in some capacity, observing the pandemic restrictions. There was no answer.

This wasn't, brother's and sisters, without God's allowance. We Christians have wondered, fell. We started to consume more of the earth, than heavens. We have forgotten that we are the living icons of God, sons and daughter of God on Heavens, that a man is much more valuable than anything temporal. And God allowed what He has allowed.

What are we to do now as the Church? To stand fast on the stone of confession. Earthly kingdoms are such passing things, A Heavenly Kingdom endures eternally. So it is important, brothers and sisters, to pay attention to both the soul and the body. It assumes walking with God-man Christ here on earth.

Vladika ended his homily with words: "May Lord bless you all!"

After Vladika's sermon, Dean of our church Fr Milorad Loncar has welcomed the Bishop as our guest, thanking him for his constant care for spiritual progress of our parish.

The Circle of Serbian sisters has prepared the meal for our dear guests and everyone present at the temple on the day. Bishop stayed for a long time afterwards, chatting with the members of the Church Council and other parishioners. This long overdue visit of our spiritual leader was both necessary and beneficial for the faithful.

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