

## **30th anniversary of enthronement of His Grace Bishop Irinej of Backa, PhD**



The thirtieth anniversary of the enthronement of His Grace Bishop Irinej of Backa, PhD, was marked on 23 December 2020. At the regular session of the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1989, hieromonk Irinej was elected as Vicar Bishop of the Serbian Patriarch, with a title of Bishop of Moravica, and following the consecration at the Patriarchate of Pec, on 20 May 2020, he was elected Bishop of Backa and was enthroned in Novi Sad, in December of the same year.

His Grace Bishop of Novi Sad and Backa, Irinej, PhD was born on 11 February 1947 by parents Mihailo and Zorka Bulovic in Stanisici, in Backa, receiving baptismal name Mirko. He finished the primary school in his birthplace and the grammar school in Sombor in 1965. He graduated in 1969 at the Faculty of Theology of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade.

During his studies, he was tonsured as a monk from his spiritual father, Venerable Justin of Celije, and received a monastic name Irinej. The same year Bishop Pavle of Raska-Prizren (later Serbian Patriarch) ordained him a hierodeacon, and then hieromonk.

During the school year 1969/1979 hieromonk Irinej taught at the Monastic school in

the Ostrog monastery. A decade (1970-1980) he spent in Athens as a postgraduate student at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Athens. In June 1980 he defended his doctoral thesis on the topic The mystery of distinguishing the divine essence and energy in the Holy Trinity according to Saint Mark Eugenikos, Bishop of Ephesus. After defending his doctoral dissertation, he went on a short study visit to the Russian Theological Institute of St. Sergius in Paris (1980-1981), where he had the opportunity to get acquainted in detail with the then a great number of Russian theologians, professors of the Institute, as well as rich theological material in Russian and significant works of Russian theologians.

In April 1981 he was elected Assistant Professor of the New Testament at the Department of the Holy Scriptures at the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade, where he also began teaching New Testament Greek language.

During his fruitful work as Professor at the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade he acquired all academic titles, from assistant professor to a regular professor, and in 2006 he was elected dean of the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the University of Belgrade. He published many theological texts, scientific and popular ones, as well as many translations. Ten years long he was editor of Orthodox Missionary (Pravoslavni misionar), a religious bimonthly magazine published by the Holy Synod of Bishops.

At the regular session of the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1989 he was elected Vicar Bishop of the Serbian Patriarch, with the title Bishop of Moravica, and then, after the consecration at the Patriarchate of Pec on 20 May 1990, he was elected Bishop of Backa and was enthroned in Novi Sad, in December of the same year. After his enthronement, a significant renewal of all aspects of church life began in the Diocese of Backa.

On Wednesday, May 20, 2020, the 30th anniversary of the episcopal consecration and three decades of the diocesan service of His Grace Bishop Irinej of Backa, PhD, was marked.

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