

29/12/2020

## **Holy Liturgy and forty-day memorial service for the Serbian Patriarch Irinej of blessed repose**



**The Conciliar Holy Liturgy and forty-day memorial service for Serbian Patriarch Irinej of blessed repose were served in the crypt of the Saint Sava Cathedral in the Vracar district on 29 December 2020.**

His Eminence Metropolitan Hrizostom of Dabar-Bosnia, the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal throne, officiated the Liturgy with the concelebration of Their Graces Bishops Pahomije of Vranje, Jovan of Sumadia and administrator of the Archbishopric of Belgrade-Karlovac, Joanikije of Budimye-Niksic and administrator of the Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral, David of Krusevac, Arsenije of Nis, Kiril of Buenos Aires and South America, Isihije of Mohacs and Metodije of Dioclea, in a prayerful presence of His Eminence Metropolitan Porfirije of Zagreb-Ljubljana and Their Graces Bishops Irinej of Backa, Ignjatije of Branicevo and Stefan of Remesiana.

Clergy of the Archbishopric of Belgrade-Karlovac and other dioceses, as well as archpriest Vitaly Tarasyev, principal of the Representation of the Russian Orthodox Church in Belgrade, concelebrated during the Liturgy. Among concelebrants there were also long-time Patriarch's closest associates: personal secretary of the Patriarch subdeacon Dejan Nakic and subdeacon Vladimir Jelic, director of the Patriarchate Palace.

Besides the relatives and close associates of Patriarch Irinej, the Liturgy and the memorial service were attended by President of the Republic of Serbia Mr. Aleksandar Vucic, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Nikola Selakovic, Minister of Internal Affairs Mr. Aleksandar Vulin, Director of the Security Information Agency Mr. Bratislav Gasic, Director of the Office for Cooperation with Churches and Religious Communities of Serbia Vladimir Roganovic, PhD; God-loving monastics and clergy from all dioceses of the Serbian Orthodox Church; rectors, professors and students of church-educational institutes; officials of the Serbian Patriarchate; employees of the Printing House of the Serbian Orthodox Church, librarians of the Patriarchate Library, representatives of the Archives of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Information and Publishing Institution of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Faith Charity Stewardship, the Patriarchal Candle Producing Workshop, Hram TV and Radio Slovoljubve and other Church institutions and organizations, representatives of the highest cultural, scientific and public institutions.

Archbishop of Belgrade Stanislav Hocevar, representatives of traditional Churches and religious communities, members of the diplomatic corps, Prince Filip and Princess Danica Karadjordjevic, members of the team which works on the interior of the Saint Sava Cathedral attended the event as well.

His Eminence Hrizostom, Metropolitan of Dabar-Bosnia, Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal Throne, held the following speech:

Your Eminences, Your Graces, Most Reverend and Reverend fathers, Venerable monastics, dear brothers and sisters,

Here we are at the 40-day memorial service for our Patriarch Irinej of the blessed memory. Quickly, like everything that happens and passes, these forty days have passed since his repose in Christ the Lord. Our Saint Sava's Church, and especially the Archbishopric of Belgrade-Karlovci, prayed for the Patriarch Irinej of blessed repose by celebrating liturgies for the departed. Apart from praying, this is also an expression of our respect for his patriarchal image and ministry. Today, on this fortieth day, we especially prayed, and will always pray, to God and the Saviour of all and everything, the God of mercy and goodness, that today when the soul of our Patriarch Irinej of blessed memory goes to the Judgment of God, may God be merciful to him, because there is no man who lives and not sins, as the Church prayer says.

The prayer of the Church for its head is a great and powerful prayer. In the prayer of the Church, in its very essence, our Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. The Church is never separated from Him and is never without Him, nor left as an orphan. We know, because that is how we believe in the Word of the Lord, that everyone who dies with faith in Christ the Lord through death passes into eternal life and becomes one with Christ the Lord. In this experience of our faith and life, the Holy Apostle Paul comforts the Christians of Thessaloniki and Corinth, and all of us to this day, that having this faith we do not grieve as those who do not have faith, but rejoice spiritually, and glorify the Merciful and Man-loving God the Father and His only-begotten Son and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, One in Essence and indivisible, knowing and believing that today our Patriarch Irinej of blessed memory is in the Kingdom of God.

Today, our Patriarch Irinej of blessed memory is included in the assembly of his predecessors, the Serbian patriarchs and the archbishops of Pec and the holy Serbian saints. Today, he is welcomed and greeted by the patriarchs Pavle, German, Vicentije, Gavriilo, Varnava, Dimitrije and everyone up to Saint Sava, and they recognize him as a wise and faithful manager of their Saint Sava's Church entrusted to him.

The ten-year patriarchal ministry of His Holiness Patriarch Irinej was very turbulent and difficult for the Church, both here in the homeland and in the world. It all hurt him and he suffered because of it. He often asked members of the Assembly and the Synod: What should we do? What can we do? He hurried tirelessly, as nobody before him, to get wherever it was difficult and his presence was necessary. We

were amazed by his decisions to travel to distant destinations without rest, to meet our faithful, to preach the Word of God to them and to teach them what is holy, honest and God pleasing. He made efforts to warn and prevent the negative outcomes of all those problems, but, to his and our regret, he could not warn and prevent some cases. He wisely steered the ship of our Saint Sava's Church, striving to preserve the Church in Unity, Holiness and Conciliarity. Unfortunately, some fell out of that ship and the sea storms swallowed them up and took them away not because of the guilt of our patriarch and father Irinej of blessed memory and our Church, but because of the incorrigibility of the erring ones. But we leave every judgment to God and history.

Today, in addition to the prayerful memory, we thank him for everything he did for the glory of God, for the joy, pride and happiness of our Serbian people. We are especially grateful to him for the great work he invested in completing the works on this magnificent Cathedral of Saint Sava, the temple on which his predecessors were zealous, but shed bitter tears as well. Let's just remember how many years it was not allowed that this very church be completed, but also its very mention was prohibited. The patriarchs of blessed memories who ministered during the godless Communist period, Gavriilo, Vicentije and German, prayed and requested for permission to proceed with its further construction, day and night, for decades and years, but instead of positive answers they were all the more humiliated, the Church was ridiculed, and the Serbian people were without rights.

"The spiritual testament of our Patriarch Irinej of blessed memory is to preserve the unity of our Serbian people through the Church, language, alphabet and culture; to preserve our Church of Saint Sava in peace, harmony and unity as the apple of our eye; to preserve our martyred Kosovo and Metohija in unity with Serbia; to help our brothers and sisters in Montenegro in their struggle to resist all those who are fighting against the Unity of the Church and our people; to never forget Republika Srpska and not to abandon it to the mercy of those whom it irritates as a conquered bastion of freedom and unity. He cared very much for our brothers and sisters in Australia, North America and Europe. He prayed and continues to pray for them, above all for their unity and harmony. We take this opportunity to call on our brothers and sisters in the Diaspora, and especially in New York, in the name of our Patriarch of Blessed Repose, to attain peace, harmony, a fraternal and Serbian covenant, and to call on them to be careful – that when seeking and forcing their own versions of justice, they do not lose that which is most important, and that is, their unity in Christ Jesus."

Brothers and sisters, let us be proud of our Patriarch Irinej of blessed memory and

let us never forget him in our prayers. We firmly believe that he will not forget us and that together with Saint Sava and all the saints he will pray for us and for our Church. Eternal memory and the Kingdom of Heaven to our Patriarch Irinej of blessed memory! Amen.

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