

Bishop Irinej Visits Saint Stephen Parish in Lackawanna



In the midst of the joy of the Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the St. Stephen Serbian Orthodox Church increased its joy through the visit of His Grace Rt. Rev. IRINEJ, our diocesan bishop. Accompanying His Grace was Protodeacon Jovan Anicic. His Grace celebrated the Divine Liturgy on the Patronal Feast of our church – St. Stephen, Archdeacon and Protomartyr, on Saturday, January 9, along with parish priest Protonamesnik Vladislav Golic, Protodeacon Jovan, and our parish Deacon Steven Gjurich. Domacini for the Slava were Sinisa and Olja Bogunovic, with their children Leonora and Milos.

In spite of the need to continue to practice physical distancing, to wear masks in church, and to use hand sanitizer for the sake of an abundance of caution, the Parish of St. Stephen was present to greet His Grace, and to pray as our Bishop led our community in prayer, as we shared in the witness of the first martyr, St. Stephen.

His Grace commented in his sermon (given in two languages) that our parish was blessed to enjoy the guardianship of such a great saint. His Grace repeatedly pointed out the ironies that turned to great blessings in the life of St. Stephen. Even

at St. Stephen's stoning, the one who hated our Lord Jesus Christ was the one who held the garments of those who stoned St. Stephen. But Christ had another plan for the man called Saul: Saul was blinded on the road to Damascus and ultimately heeded the call of our Lord and was known as St. Paul, the greatest of the missionary apostles.

His Grace served the Divine Liturgy on both Saturday, January 9, and Sunday, January 10. After each Liturgy a luncheon was served for His Grace and the faithful in attendance at the services. In spite of the diminished numbers due to the pandemic, the faithful group of adults and children joined the clergy for these agape meals. On Sunday, the director of the Department of Christian Education of our diocese, Protodeacon Jovan, participated in a lively conversation with the Church School teachers of the parish. Deacon Steven Gjurich, Popadija Sara Golic, Gregory Korbut and Protinica Victoria Trbuhovich were present [Amanda Wesolowski and Nancy Mondich were unable to attend] and engaged in discussion concerning the quality of instruction, including music education, instruction that included creative art projects, and more informal teaching scenarios, where appropriate. It was noted that each group of students has particular needs, and we need to be responsive to those needs for the benefit of our students. The discussion ended with the promise to continue to dialogue with the Protodeacon Jovan, supporting one another in any way possible.

Each canonical visit of His Grace Bishop IRINEJ is an opportunity for learning, for increasing our prayers, and for coming to the Divine Banquet Table of our Lord. We greet you, Your Grace, and we value your spiritual fatherhood, both for our parish and for each of us individually. We humbly ask that you continue to pray for us.

Eis Polla Eti, Despota!











