

Resolution of the 2021 Annual Diocesan Assembly of Eastern America



IN THE NAME OF THE ALL HOLY AND LIFEGIVING TRINITY!

We, the clergy, monastics, and representatives of the people of God, ordained and elected members to the Annual Assembly of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Eastern America have gathered together for the Virtual Annual Assembly of the God-protected Diocese of Eastern America of the Serbian Orthodox Church on March 13, in the Year of Our Lord 2021 Honoring the 100th Anniversary of the First Serbian Orthodox Diocese in the United States of America and Canada 1921-2021

Today, as we celebrate the memory of the Venerable Basil the Confessor and the Venerable John Cassian, the Holy Spirit has gathered us in the community of the Body of Christ that He might bring us closer to our Heavenly Father. Having manifested the fullness of God's Holy Church, gathered around our Bishop, Father and Archpastor Irinej, we greet the fullness of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the person of His Holiness, the newly elected and newly enthroned Archbishop of Pech, Metropolitan of Belgrade-Karlovci, and Serbian Patriarch Kyr PORFIRIJE.

We offer congratulations and greetings to our new Patriarch PORFIRIJE, and we greet the Holy Synod of Bishops, the Episcopal Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North, Central and South America, as well as the members of the Central Church Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North, Central and South

America. We also greet His Royal Highness, Crown Prince Alexander, Heir to the Throne, and his wife, Her Royal Highness Princess Katherine.

It is with deep sadness that we remember the repose of His Holiness Patriarch Irinej, His Eminence Metropolitan Amfilohije, His Grace Bishop Atanasije, His Grace Bishop Milutin, and all the clergy, monastics and laity, and, especially with gratitude, the first responders and health workers, that have passed into life eternal as a result of the onslaught of the unique coronavirus and due to other causes from 2020 to the present day. May their memory be eternal!

The past year, 2020, also marked a solemn occasion, the 50th Anniversary of the Repose of His Majesty King Peter II, a rare monarch who shared in the plight of his people and was the only monarch interred in the United States of America, at the St. Sava Monastery in Libertyville. Presently, he reposes among his glorious ancestors at the Royal St. George Mausoleum in Oplenac.

Looking back at 2020 and the Extraordinary Church Assembly in Clearwater, we give thanks that, in our Diocese, we were able to host His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Blessed Memory and His Grace Bishop Jovan of Shumadia, Member of the Holy Synod of Bishops, together with the plentitude of our local Church in North, Central and South America, putting to rest all rumors and uncertainties.

The past year also represented the 100th Anniversary of Unification of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Restoration of its Patriarchate 1920, under the leadership of Metropolitan Dimitrije of Belgrade and Serbia, elected as the first Patriarch of the Unified Serbian Orthodox Church, and Crown Prince Alexander, Regent of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes at Sremski Karlovci.

WHEREAS this present year, 2021, we honor the 100th Anniversary of the Founding of the First Serbian Orthodox Diocese of America and Canada, through the efforts of our Holy visionary Bishop Nicholai of Zhicha and Ohrid, who became its first administrator, succeeded by Holy Bishop Mardarije, our first Diocesan Bishop;

WHEREAS this present year, 2021, also gives us cause to honor the 140th Anniversary of the Birth of the Holy Bishop Nicholai (January 5, 1881-2021), and the 65th Anniversary of his Blessed Repose (March 18, 1956-2021);

WHEREAS the relics of St. Mardarije of Libertyville, together with the relics of the Holy New Martyrs of Prebilovci, are enshrined in the new Antimensia, consecrated in honor of the 800th Anniversary of the Autocephaly of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which now grace the holy altars of the churches, monasteries and chapels of our God-protected Diocese;

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Serbian Orthodox Church on this continent, which was founded by two saints, continues to strive to assist in all manner possible the restoration of various dimensions of parish life, including the sanctity of life, and life itself.

WHEREAS the world experienced the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic from early in the year 2020 to the present, and WHEREAS the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America, our own Bishop and Diocesan Administrative Board, as well as Federal, State and Local governments all issued precautionary measures to protect and preserve our faithful.

WHEREAS our Diocesan Ministries, the Department of Christian Education, under the direction of Protodeacon Jovan Anicic, the Department of Internet Ministries, under the administration Fr. Aleksa Pavichevich, and Theodule Press: Bishop Nicholai Bookstore & Publications, under the management of Mr. Milovan Jovanovic, continue to prosper and develop, offering new avenues of creative recourse for our clergy, monastics and faithful, especially our youth; and

WHEREAS the clergy and laity of our Diocese have adopted successful interventions to continue to provide our faithful with access to the divine services, religious instruction, and stewardship:

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that we offer our gratitude to our clergy, assisted by the laity, for implementing creative ways such as live-streaming Divine Liturgy, offering virtual sermons, telephone prayer services and creative spots, which have provided uninterrupted communication and spiritual nourishment for their faithful.

WHEREAS, we greatly rejoice that the Secure & Enclosure Phase of our major Diocesan Building Project, The St. Sava Pro-Cathedral in NYC, is complete, and WHEREAS we are awaiting certification for occasional occupancy; and WHEREAS our Pro-Cathedral spans an entire city block, and His Grace Bishop Irinej, has noted that “the vast grandeur of this edifice stands before God and humanity, likened unto the very image of Christ’s Resurrection”; and WHEREAS according to the vision of our Diocesan Bishop Irinej, “our Cathedral promises to be a perfect

harmony of East and West, where, in the timeless words of our Holy Bishop Nikolai (Velimirovich) – “the Light of the East and the Light of the West will rest at their noon”:

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that we continue to support, materially and prayerfully, the unabated reconstruction of the St. Sava Pro-Cathedral, seeing the project through to its completion.

WHEREAS we are joyful in the reaffirmation of our indivisible unity, which has never been called into question, and that we have cast aside all misconceptions caused by ignorance or malice, and WHEREAS we reject the machinations of persons of ill will who have been attacking the hierarchs of our Church and their attempts to destabilize the same:

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, as noted in the document “Setting the Record Straight” (https://easterndiocese.org/news_201231_2), that: These acts of dishonesty, division, dissension, and satanic hatred go against the very tenants of our Orthodox Christian Faith. In Christ there is no room for division or hatred. Our faith and Christ’s Church have survived for over 2000 years, under God and by His grace, in unity against every imaginable onslaught throughout history. We are not individual parishes and peoples unto ourselves. We are one hierarchical whole in Christ’s service. According to St. Ignatius of Antioch, whose life spanned the latter years of the first century and the early years of the second: ‘Where the Bishop is, there is the Church’. And if we attempt to do anything apart from our Bishop, we separate ourselves from the unity of the Church in Christ Jesus;

and having witnessed to the above statement, we pray for the enlightenment of those sowing discord, for their restoration to the community of the faithful in Christ, and for their salvation.

We express our steadfast support for His Grace our Bishop Irinej, the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Executive Board of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Eastern America, as well as the leadership of our Holy Church in our Serbian Fatherland and throughout the Diaspora, and to all persons of good will. We thank God in His Saints for our unity and harmony as a community of believers, praying fervently that we always remain bound together in love as a Diocesan Family and that our God, Who loves humankind, will always look favorably upon us, as we move forward, ever progressing, yet always remaining the same, and never stagnating. We thank God for our Fatherland from which we herald, and for the Country in which we live and freely worship.

Amen!

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