22/07/2021

Funeral of protopresbyter-stavrophor Adam Yonitch



On the Feast of the Holy Wonderworkers and Unmercenaries Cosmos and Damian, July 14, 2021, the Very Reverend Protopresbyter-Stavrophor Adam Yonitch, Jr., Lt. Col. USAFR, who reposed in the Lord on Sunday, July 11, 2021, was laid to rest following a lengthy illness.

The preceding evening, the Funeral Vigil was celebrated by His Grace Bishop Irinej of Eastern America, together with numerous clergy from the Pittsburgh and Cleveland Deaneries, and clergy from sister Orthodox jurisdictions, in the Holy Ascension Serbian Orthodox Church in Youngwood, Pennsylvania. The homily was delivered by Protopresbyter-Stavrophor Stevo Rocknage of McKeesport, father confessor to the newly reposed, Protopresbyter Adam. In his deeply touching recollections of Fr Adam, he emphasized Fr. Adam’s all-embracing love for his Church, his family and local community, which never faltered under the weight of

his illness. He concluded by citing Fr. Adam’s request of him, to keep everyone in the embrace of Christ’s love.

The following day the Holy Hierarchical Memorial Liturgy was celebrated by His Grace Bishop Irinej, together with numerous clergy. In his sermon, following the reading of the Gospel lection, the Bishop, reflecting on the life of Fr. Adam as priest, spoke in depth about the meaning of service in the Lord and the sacrifices it entails. His Grace noted that the life of a parish priest is intrinsically intertwined with the lives of his entrusted flock. Every priest shares not only his paternal love and life with his own family, but also with his parishioners, which leaves its indelible mark on both his and their souls.

Profoundly moved by Fr. Adam’s admonishment, Bishop Irinej deigned it proper to fulfill those words by elevating Presbyter Rumen Stoychev, to the rank of Protopresbyter during the celebration of the solemn Liturgy. As His Grace noted, this was Fr. Adam’s own final embrace to his successor as parish priest at Holy Ascension Church, where he faithfully served.

Protopresbyter Adam leaves behind his wife of 45 years, Roberta Lee (Bazala) Yonitch, his son, SPC Damian, and his daughter, Mira Yonitch, together with their families, together with the parish family at Holy Ascension of Our Lord Church in Youngwood, as well as those in other parishes where he served: St. George Church, Carmichaels, PA, St. Nicholas Church, Johnstown, PA, and Holy Resurrection Church, Lebanon, PA.

He was also commissioned as the first American-Serbian Orthodox Chaplain in the United States Air Force, serving at Andrews AFB, Washington, DC, Offutt AFB, Omaha, NE, Lackland AFB, San Antonio, TX, Ramstein AFB, Kaiserslautern, Germany, Wright Patterson, Dayton, OH, and FE Warren Cheyenne, Wyoming, as well as serving during active duty, in the Moshannon Valley Corrections Prison Chaplaincy.

“Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master!” (Matt. 25:23).









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