22/11/2021

Patriarch Porfirije: Patriarch Irinej was one with his people as he was one with Christ



On the first anniversary of the repose of the blessed memory of Patriarch Irinej, His Holiness Porfirije, the Serbian Patriarch officiated the Holy Hierarchical Liturgy in the crypt of the Cathedral of Saint Sava in Belgrade, on November 20, 2021.

Their Graces Bishops Pahomije of Vranje and Arsenija of Nis served together in the prayerful presence of Their Graces Bishops Andrej of Austria-Switzerland, Isihije of Valjevo, Stefan of Remesiana, Jerotej of Toplica, Justin of Hvosno and Sava of Marca. After the Holy Liturgy, Patriarch Porfirije served the annual memorial service for the Patriarch Irinej of blessed repose.

In addition to numerous faithful people, the service was attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Nikola Selaković; Director of the Office for Cooperation with Churches and Religious Communities, Dr. Vladimir Roganović; representatives of the diplomatic corps, as well as numerous representatives of the cultural and public life of Serbia.

Biography of Patriarch Irinej

His Holiness Patriarch Irinej (Gavrilovic) of Serbia was born in the village of Vidova,

near town of Cacak, Serbia, on 28 August, 1930. His baptismal name is Miroslav. He finished elementary school in his village, and later on high school in Cacak. Thereupon he enrolled and completed Theological Seminary in Prizren, Kosovo and Metochia, and graduated at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Belgrade. Upon graduation, he did his army service for a year and a half. The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church appointed him a professor of the Prizren Theological Seminary, but before assuming this assignment he was tonsured by the late Serbian Patriarch Herman (German) and got the monastic name Irinej, at the Rakovica monastery near Belgrade in October 1959.

That same month, on the Feat of St. Paraskeva, October 27, 1959, at the Ruzica church within the Kalemegdan old town of Belgrade, he was ordained hieromonk. While he worked as a professor at the Prizren Seminary he spent a period of time at post-graduate studies in Athens. In 1969 he was appointed as Principal of the Monastic School in the Monastery of Ostrog, Montenegro, from where he returned back to Prizren and became Principal of the Prizren Seminary. From that office he was elected as Vicar Bishop of the then Patriarch of Serbia with the title of Bishop of Moravica in May, 1974. A year later, in 1975, he was elected as diocesan Bishop of Nis and enthroned in the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Nis on 15 June, 1975. As Bishop he headed the Diocese of Nis for the next 35 years.

When the Theological Seminary was displaced from Prizren due to Albanian revolts in 1999, Patriarch Irinej as Bishop of Nis made it possible that a new, large building of the Seminary was built in Nis, where the Seminary could continue its life.

The Holy Assembly of Bishops elected Bishop Irinej as Archbishop of Pec, Metropolitan of Belgrade-Karlovci and Serbian Patriarch on January 22, 2010, as successor of the previous Patriarch Pavle (Stojcevic). Consequently, he is the 45th Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Serbian Patriarch Irinej departed to the Lord at the Karaburma Military Hospital in Belgrade, on November 20, 2020.

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