

Former Metropolitan Panteleimon of Belgium fell asleep in the Lord



His Eminence Former Metropolitan Panteleimon Kontogiannis of Belgium fell asleep in the lord on Tuesday morning, 24 January 2023, which was announced by the Holy Metropolis of Belgium.

The late Metropolitan was the head of the Orthodox Church in Belgium for 31 years and ministered all these years as a member of the holy clergy of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

The former Metropolitan Panteleimon of Belgium - born Nikolaos Kontogiannis - was born in 1935 on the island of Chios. After his high school studies, he studied at the famous Theological School of Halki, from which he graduated in 1957. In 1954 he was ordained a deacon under the Metropolitan Iakovos of Iconium, who gave him the name Panteleimon. Three years later he was ordained a priest under the same Metropolitan.

In November 1957 he arrived in Belgium, where he founded several parishes. In 1969, the Ecumenical Patriarchate established the Holy Metropolis of Belgium and the Exarchate of the Netherlands and Luxembourg, to which he was appointed

Protosyncellus. In 1974, the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate unanimously elected him assistant bishop of the Metropolitan of Belgium under the title of the once brilliant Diocese of Apollonia. His episcopal ordination took place in the Metropolitan Church of the Holy Archangels of Brussels on 18 August 1974.

At the end of 1982 he was elected Metropolitan of Belgium and Exarch of the Netherlands and Luxembourg, succeeding the first Metropolitan of Belgium Emilianos Zacharopoulos. During the days of the late Metropolitan Panteleimon, the Holy Metropolis developed particularly with the most important point being the official recognition of the Orthodox Church under the Belgian State and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. He was tirelessly on the side of the thousands of Greeks in all three Benelux countries and was very interested in preserving their unity as Orthodox Christians. With the establishment of the Benelux Orthodox Episcopal Assembly in 2010, he was its first president. In addition, he actively participated in the various ecumenical activities of the Benelux countries.

The blessed Metropolitan Panteleimon resigned in November 2013 for health reasons and was succeeded by one of his assistant bishops, His Eminence Metropolitan Athenagoras (Peckstadt) of Belgium from Sinope.

The funeral service of blessed Metropolitan Panteleimon will take place in his birthplace, Chios, on Friday, 27 January 2023, at 3:00 p.m.

All the Orthodox Christians of the Benelux countries will remember with gratitude this great figure that existed for each one of them.

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