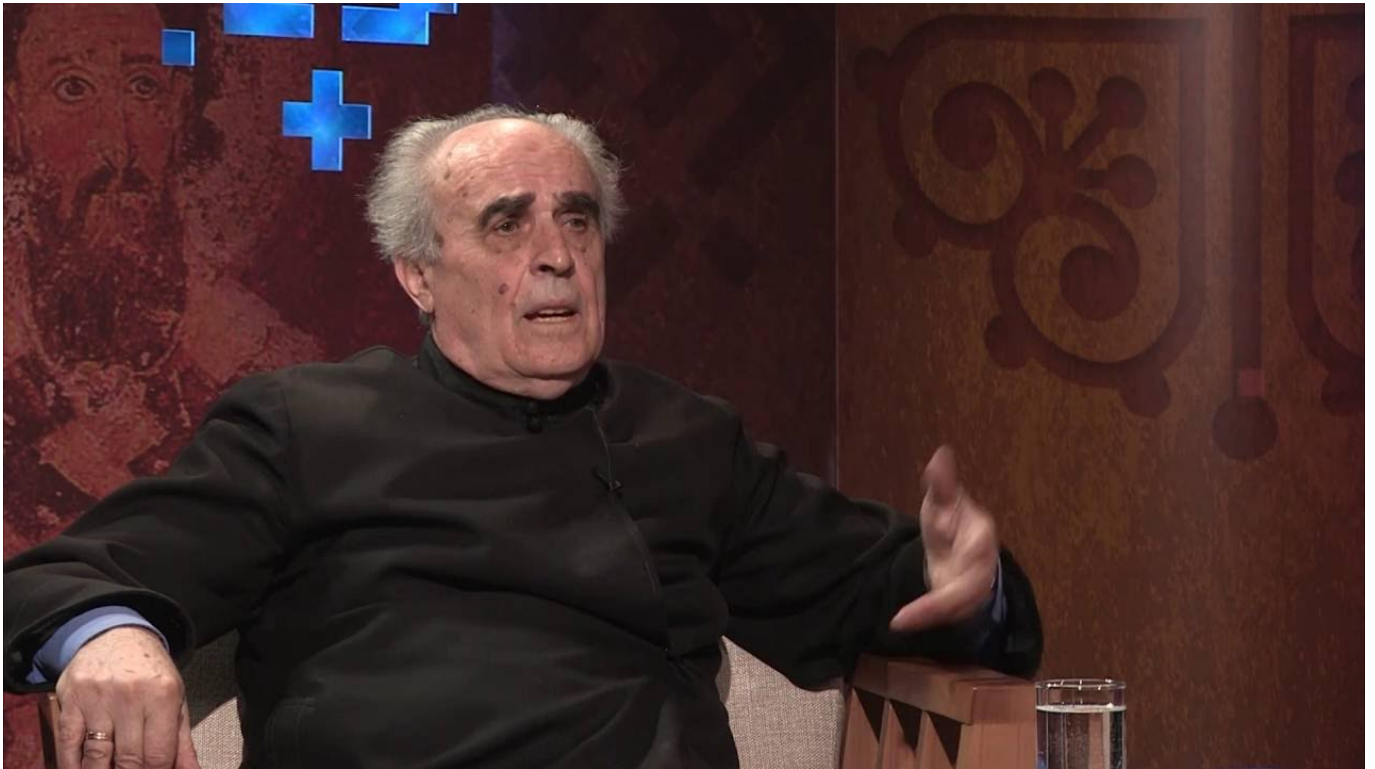
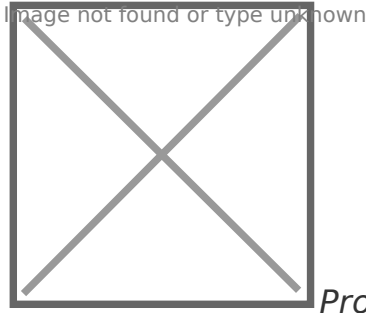


Protodeacon R. Rakić: Patriarch Pavle was a man of the Spirit



Who is Patriarch Pavle? What is his ministry and will be canonized as a saint? The team of Dobrotoliubie talks with protodeakon Radomir Rakic, who personally knew the Serbian patriarch.

Protodeacon Radomir Rakić was born on July 25, 1938. He graduated the Faculty of Theology in 1962 and the Faculty of Philology Department of English 1965 in Belgrade. He is a professor of English language and Literature. Meanwhile, he studied at the Theological Faculty in Bern (Switzerland). He speaks German, English, and Russian languages, from which he translates theological literature.



Protodeacon Radomir Rakić is a professor at the Faculty of

Theology of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Belgrade and a New Testament lecturer at the Theological seminary in Serbia (Foca) and an official translator of the Holy Synod in the Serbian Patriarchate.

He represents the Serbian Orthodox Church at many intercultural and international meetings, seminars, conferences and meetings (Bulgaria, Greece, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, England, Hungary, Belgium, the Netherlands, etc.). As a delegate of the Serbian Church, he participated in the Council of Churches in Nairobi (Kenya) in 1975 and in Canberra (Australia) in 1991. He organized dozens of theological conferences (mostly missionary) on the territory of former Yugoslavia

Protodikon Radomir Rakić had personally known Serbian Patriarch Pavle and agreed to share his memories with the readers of the „Dobrotolubie“.

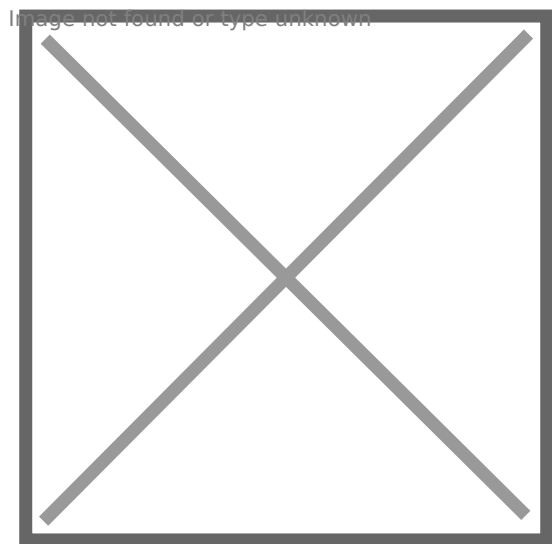
With Protodeacon Radomir Rakić speaks Nikolina Alexandrova

I will be glad if you share Your memories for His Holiness Patriarch Pavle. Do you remember the first time that you met Patriarch Pavle?

– It was in 1957 when he was appointed as diocesan Bishop of Raska-Prizren (what is Kosovo and Metochia). We at the then Theological Seminary (Bogoslovija) heard that the news on his election by the Assembly of Bishops (Sobor) found him in a water mill-house in Monastery Raca by the Drina river. It was obvious from the very beginning that we pupils of the Theological Seminary in Prizren had to do with another format of a Bishop, with a monastic type. He came regularly to every service in the Prizren city Cathedral church of St. George and, when necessary, he would not mind chanting together with us seminarians, laying a special stress on the order of services – Typikon. For that reason, services might last longer than we had been used earlier under auspices of an old bishop Vladimir. His Divine arhhierarchal (arhijerejska) liturgies were festivities for us seminarians.

I remember especially one moment in the church. Namely, we pupils were used to read psalms very, very quickly, just to show that we “know” Church-Slavonic. But, during one morning service Bishop Pavle aksed for the Casoslov to read himself the

psalm 50: Pomiluj nas, Boze, po velicjej milosti tvojej i po mnozestvu shchedrot tvojih... From the very beginning we noticed that he read slowly, word by word, clearly, so that we all understood the meaning of the psalm although it was in Church-Slavonic. It was a lesson for us all throughout our life – not to haste while reading liturgical texts, so that the faithful could understand the meaning.



Please, tell me what Patriarch Pavle was in his everyday life when communicating with people, informally?

-While in a street or at any other place Patriarch Pavle was very informal. Judging not only from his outward appearance (as Patriarch he did not like to have his white *pana* on his Kamilavka, as he according to the Church Constitution was obliged to carry), his shoes were worn out but clean, his cassock (*mantija*) also modest, but very clean; he even did not grow his beard or hair long; he published an article on the length of monks' beard and hair indicating that there was no prescription that they should be long; he himself gave a sample, but not all the monks or bishops observe his advice.

Judging by his way of dressing you would not know that it was the Patriarch in a bus or in a tram. Yes, he liked to travel by city traffic not expecting that people would give him their seat. In this way he expressed his solidarity with us who did not have personal cars. (The previous Patriarch German did not even think of travelling by bus or of walking along a street all alone!).

There were, of course, formal reception at the Patriarchate, when P.Pavle received in audience high religious and political, educational, cultural representatives. But anybody could enjoy "reception" with the Patriarch after a morning service and

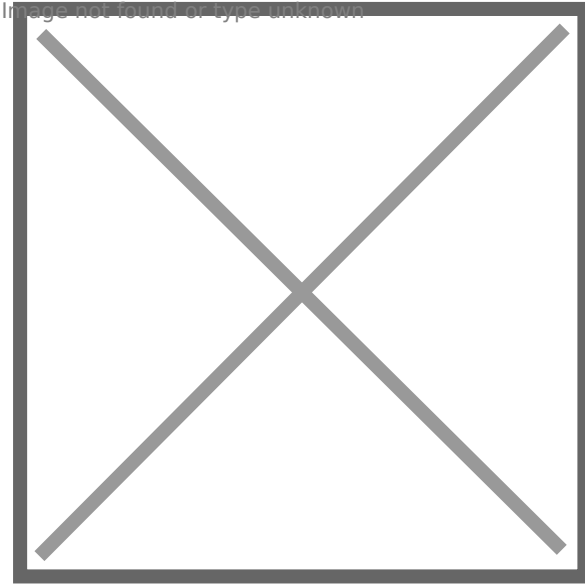
especially after an evening service in the Cathedral visa-vie the Patriarchate; one might pardon His Holiness in the street and put him any question.



Now we come to a very important moment in

his life: he would not leave anyone without a proper answer! He would employ all his efforts to clarify a problem to a dialogue partner, dealing with the matter from all the sides – and so as long as the partner has understood the matter, which is primarily a Church doctrine on dogmatical and specially on ethical matters. For him any matter was important, whether to teach a priest (or anybody else who came to him) to give up smoking or alcohol, or to start working and earn for living. One would think that one Patriarch wastes his time talking about such trifling matters, not to smoke and the like. But, essentially one perceives that it was a huge problem we “mortals” did not understand.

Something else: the Patriarch always had time! Be it in church to serve or chant during long Lenten services, or travelling by tram far away to celebrate, or writing studies (we published three volumes of his collected articles, previously published in the official organ of the Church “Glasnik”, monthly, which means that the Patriarch as Bishop from Prizren and later as Patriarch had to submit for print an article in a form of a question and answer every month! And thirty years long.). He would use any span of time for being employed. We would usually say: I have an appointment in 60 minutes, so I cannot start working on something else now. But, Patriarch Pavle would use any spare moment creatively! Another example: if he was supposed to travel outside of Belgrade early in the morning, he would celebrate Liturgy in a shortened way in his private chapel even at 4 o'clock in the



morning.

Many people remember Patriarch Pavle's words, his advice on the daily actions of people and God's love, but few of us know that Patriarch Pavle is a liturgist and He was studying the history of Divine Liturgy. Please tell me a little about this part of Patriarch Pavle's life.

– We in the Serbian Church were happy that Prof. Lazar Mirkovic had studied at the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Chernovice, today's Ukraine, as your previous Patriarch Kiril did (of course, before the First World War). When he was appointed as Professor of Liturgics at the newly-established Theological Faculty in Belgrade (1920), he translated and adopted liturgical books of his Chernovice professors Mitrofanovic-Tarnavski, and published in three volumes between the world wars, and after the WW2 he added his book on the history of feasts-days HEORTOLOGIJA, so that we in the Serbian Church have a complete opus in Liturgics, which is not case even in Greece.

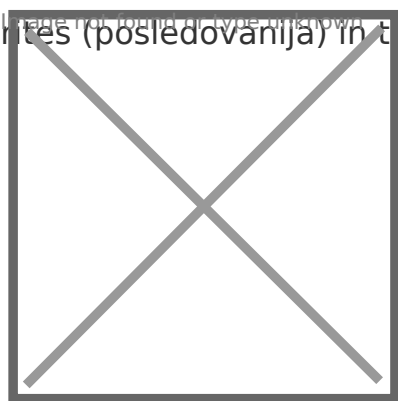
Patriarch Pavle wrote studies on some unclear liturgical matters as well as on some ethical dilemmas or Church art that demanded a further specification. For instance, he wrote real studies in the CHURCH CALENDAR (Old and New), What is acedia and what is oikonomia, Attitude of the Orthodox Church towards contraceptive means, Baptism of a person who changed his sex through operation, Place of women in the Orthodox Church, Questions and answers for a candidate before his blessing as hypodeacon (ctec), Could a priest take Holy Communion when he does not celebrate, On the second marriage of a priest, Should ladies cover their heads in the church, On fasting, On a Church burial of the one who committed suicide, Beatitudes (Blazena) from Octoechos and Manaion for every day, Orthodox Church on free will and predestination, What will be with souls of those who have not known Christian faith, What are cryptographs, On rendering (izobrazenii) of the

image of Christ and of the Saints, How is St. Christophor painted, Meaning of the words "Tvoja od Tvojih", etc.

All these articles have been published in three volumes under a Title "Let some questions of our Faith be clear" (Da nam budu jasnija neka pitanja nase vere), altogether on 1.280 pages.

In addition, he prepared for publication a new edition of SLUZEBNIK in Serbian, of some Prayer books, and especially he looked after publication of the SRBLJAK (Serbicon), a liturgical book with services for Serbian saints.

Patriarch Pavle was the first to examine the early history of Church services and rites (posledovanja) in the Serbian Church.



In recent years there have been talks of a

canonization of Patriarch Pavle. Is it likely that he will be canonized?

-It is difficult to say. The Bishops missed to do it at the Assembly in May this year, as the tenth anniversary of his death is to be marked in November this year. Many people venerate his grave at the Monastery Rakovica (15 km away from Belgrade), light candles in honour of him, maybe some pray for his intercessions, one lady witnessed that he conceived a child thanks to his prayers...

An anecdote: At a meeting of the Holy Assembly of Bishops (Sobor), some bishops suggested someone to be canonized, but the Patriarch Pavle asked them: Is he going to be a greater saint in heavens if we mortals canonize him? -No, the bishops answered.

How should people remember Patriarch Pavle?

-They will memorize him as a modest man, as one of them, who travelled with them by public transport, as a man of prayer, who loved everyone and wanted to foster dialogue with atheists, non-Orthodox, non-Christians, especially during the civil conflict in these areas in 1991-1995 and after that year. Even in his old age he would undertake long journeys in order to meet with political or other religious

dignitaries, because his motto was: it is better to spend a whole month leading a dialogue than one human victim. His saying is very popular over here : Budimo ljudi!

Two million of people were assembled at his funeral service in the Belgrade Cathedral of Archangel Michael.

Protodeacon Radomir Rakic,

Editor-in-chief of the Information Service of the SOC

- Source: dobrotoliubie.com