His Holiness Patriarch Paul of Serbia passed away in the Lord

The Primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church, His Holiness Patriarch Paul, 96, died on 15 November 2009 in Belgrade.

The Patriarch of Serbia, Archbishop of Pec and Metropolitan of Belgrade-Karlovci, His Holiness Paul (his secular name is Gojko Stojcevic) was born on 11 September 1914 at the Kucanci village in Slavonia (Yugoslavia). He graduated from a gymnasium in Belgrade and the seminary in Sarajevo and continued his education at the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade.

During World War II, he took refuge in the Holy Trinity Monastery in Ovcar and became a novice it it. He gave religious instruction to refugees' children. After the war he took monastic vows in the Monastery of the Annunciation in Ovcar in 1948 and was ordained as hierodeacon.

From 1949 to 1955, Hierodeacon Paul was member of the monastic community in the Raca monastery and fulfilled various monastic functions in it. In 1954 he was ordained as hieromonk and in 1957 was elevated to the rank of archimandrite. From 1955 to 1957 he studied the New Testament and Liturgics at the Faculty of Theology in Athens.

Archimandrite Paul was consecrated as Bishop of Ras and Prizren on 29 May 1957 at the cathedral in Belgrade. As bishop he organized in his diocese the construction of new churches and restoration work and was actively involved in the preservation of Orthodox shrines in Kosovo and Methochia. He often celebrated in various churches of his diocese. However, Bishop Paul did not abandon his studies and teaching. In 1988, the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade made him Doctor of Theology.

In November 1990, Bishop Paul was elected Primate in place of Patriarch German who fell ill. His enthronement as Patrirch of the Serbian Orthodox Church took place on 2 December 1990.

During his patriachal ministry, His Holiness Paul visited many dioceses of the Serbian Church both inside and outside Yugoslavia. He also visited his flock in Australia, America, Canada and Western Europe.

His Holiness Paul wrote several books. He published his articles on liturgics in the Serbian Church's magazine for over twenty years. For a long time he chaired the synodal commission for the translation of the New Testament. Since 13 November 2007, he underwent inpatient treatment at the Military

Academy’s hospital in Belgrade.

On 15 May 2008, the Bishops’ Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church charged the Holy Synod with the patriarchal functions on a temporary basis, with Archbishop Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Coastlands as its temporary chairman.

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