Moscow Patriarchate hierarchs attend enthronement of Metropolitan Joanikije of Montenegro and the Littoral



On September 5, 2021, the installation of Metropolitan Joanikije of Montenegro and the Littoral to the throne took place at the Monastery of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Cetinje, the historical center of Montenegro. He had been elected this May by the Bishops' Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church in place of Metropolitan Amfilohije of Montenegro and the Littoral who passed away in the Lord.

In the eve of the installation, the vespers were celebrated in the capital city of Podgorica, in the square of the Cathedral of the Resurrection, with the gathering of a multitude of people who filled not only the vast square but also adjacent streets. The feast presided over by His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije of Serbia brought together the hierarchy and clergy of the Serbian Orthodox Church, guests fr om Local Orthodox Churches and tens of thousands faithful Montenegrins.

Among the guests were Metropolitan Ambrose of Tver and Kashin, Metropolitan Mark of Berlin and Germany (Russian Church Outside Russia), as well as hierarchs of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church including Metropolitan Anthony of Borispol and Brovary and Metropolitan Sergiy of Ternopol and Kremenets, chancellor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Present at the vespers were representatives of the Montenegro government and high-ranking guests including Russian Federation Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary V. V. Maslennikov. Before

the beginning of the divine service, Montenegro Prime-Minister Zdravko Krivokapic warmly welcomed each of the hierarchs who came for the festivities.

After the Great Vespers, Metropolitan Joanikije addressed himself to His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije of Serbia with words of welcome noting in particular that the Patriarchal ministry ‘is the service of reconciliation and unification’.

Then His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije of Serbia addressed the Montenegrin people with words of love and peace, calling upon the Orthodox Christians of the country to support the newly elected Metropolitan Joanikije of Montenegro and the Littoral.

Speaking about those who oppose the enthronization of Metropolitan Joanikije, His Holiness said that the Orthodox Christians should pray for them but also pray ‘that our hearts may extend up to the heaven so that there may be an entrance to our hearts’. ‘Because we as Orthodox Christians do know: regardless of how one sees and experience oneself, how one sees oneself in accordance with one’s national orientation, what political view one has of the world and to what world one belongs, we all are one, Patriarch Porfirije said noting that the Church ‘is a space for us all’.

The speeches of the Patriarch and Metropolitan Joanikije were repeatedly acclaimed by the people who rejoiced in the coming of His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije making his first Primatial visit to Montenegro and in the upcoming installation of His Eminence Joanikije to the see of the Metropolitans of Montenegro and the Littoral.

Then the guests proceeded to the crypt of the Cathedral of the Resurrection in which His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije of Serbia said the office for the dead at the burial place of the late Metropolitan Amfilohije.

In the end of the evening, the cathedral square was illuminated with fireworks. People joyfully greeted their Patriarch and Metropolitan Joanikije and lighted candles.

Attempts were made to hinder the festivities in Cetinje by radical persons who were supported by incumbent president of the country M. Jukanovic, who had repeatedly spoken against the canonical Church. As an atheist by conviction, Milo Jukanovic lobbied the interests of the schismatic structure ‘The Montenegrin Orthodox Church’ not recognized in the Orthodox world.

The radicals blocked the roads leading to the Monastery of the Nativity of the Mother of God in Cetinje.

Early in the morning, a column of buses carrying hierarchy and clergy set off for the Cetinje monastery but found barricades on their way surrounded by several dozens of aggressive people; they held the traffic. The column peacefully made a U-turn and drove back.

The participants in the festivities attended the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Podgorica. That time, in spite of well-grounded fears as to his personal safety, His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije arrived to the Cetinje monastery in helicopter to administer the installation of His Eminence Joanikije at the place wh ere all the Metropolitans of Montenegro were installed. Not numerous but loud and aggressive, politically engaged opponents to the lawful and canonical enthronement of Metropolitan Joanikije were not ready to such a turn of the events.

The Patriarch’s concelebrants included the elected Metropolitan Joanikije of Montenegro and the Littoral, Bishop David of Kruševac and an assembly of clergy. After the service, Bishop David read out the resolution of the Bishops’ Council of the Serbian Orthodox Church on the election of His Eminence

Joanikije.

Addressing Metropolitan Joanikije at the presentation of the crozier to him, Patriarch Porfirije reminded him of the difficulties and responsibility of the service he was accepting. ‘Your mission will lie in blunting edges, building bridges, not asking who is who, to which nation one belongs… but asking only the name one was given when baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’, His Holiness stressed noting that ‘in the Church there are no borders, nor enmity, nor divisions’, ‘she gathers together everybody through Christ and in Christ’.

Metropolitan Joanikije, in his turn, underlined, ‘By your coming, Your Holiness, and by your having shared with us the present concerns you have shown great love not only for me but also for the whole people of Montenegro. Coming with you, Your Holiness, are representatives of holy Churches of God who bear in their souls the pleroma of Universal Orthodoxy; they have gathered together to share their joy with us but they were prevented from coming to Cetinje. However, they are praying today in the church of the Resurrection of Christ next to the grave of Metropolitan Amfilohije of blessed memory… Together with you they have lifted up prayers for peace, reconciliation and love among brothers’.

After the reading of the Gospel during the Liturgy in the Cathedral of the Resurrection in Podgorica, it was announced that the enthronement of Metropolitan Joanikije in the Cetinje monastery was accomplished. It provoked an unprecedented outburst of applause with loud exclaims ‘Axios!’

After the Divine Liturgy, His Holiness Porfirije and Metropolitan Joanikije of Montenegro and the Littoral with Montenegro Prime Minister Zdravko Krivokapic arrived in the Cathedral of the Resurrection to the rumble of applause.

‘I congratulate you upon the new metropolitan whom we have installed today in the Cetinje Monastery by God’s Providence, by the Holy Spirit, by the prayers of the fathers of the Holy Synod and the prayers of all of you’, His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije said addressing those present, ‘Rejoicing today is the whole Orthodox Church, both in Heaven and on the earth. But above all, rejoicing today is St. Peter of Cetinje, St. Basil of Ostrog and the multitude of the people of God on the throne of Metropolitans of Cetinje, Montenegro and the Littoral up to our unforgettable spiritual father, our teacher and father to all of you here - Blessed Metropolitan Amfilohije. They are rejoicing in their noble and worthy heir’.

Congratulations were extended by representatives of Local Orthodox Churches.

Metropolitan Ambrose of Tver and Kashin, who came with a blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, conveyed to His Eminence Joanikije a congratulatory message and best wishes from the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church. Read out was also a message of greetings from chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate Department for External Church Relations Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk.

On the same day, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill sent a congratulatory message to Metropolitan Joanikije on his enthronement.

DECR Communication Service
With reference to the websites of the Metropolis of Montenegro and the Littoral,
Metropolis of Tver,
Telegram-channel of Metropolitan Ambrose of Tver and Kashin

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