The Primates of the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches head the Divine Liturgy and take the funeral for the bishop of Moravica Anthony at the Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow



DECR Communication service, 16.03.2024.

On 16th March 2024 on the day of all the venerable fathers who have shone forth, a moveable feast celebrated on the Saturday of Cheese-Fare Week, at the Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and His Holiness the Patriarch of Serbia Profirije headed the Divine Liturgy and tool the funeral service for the newly-departed bishop of Moravica Anthony, the auxiliary of the Patriarch of Serbia, representative of the Patriarch of Serbia to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, and dean of the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul at the Yauza Gates in Moscow, which also serves as the representation church (metochion) of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Moscow.

The bishop of Moravica Anthony reposed in the Lord on 11th March 2024 after and long and grave illness. Up until 15th March the body of the newly-reposed bishop lay in its coffin at the Serbian metochion in Moscow at the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul by the Yauza Gates. In the

morning of 16th March the coffin with the body of the newly-departed bishop was transported to the Christ the Saviour Cathedral and placed in the centre of the church. Wreaths were placed of the steps of the solea fr om the Patriarch of Moscow and the Patriarch of Serbia.

Concelebrating with the primates of the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches were: the chancellor the Moscow Patriarchy and first auxiliary bishop of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia for the city of Moscow the metropolitan of Voskresensk Gregory; the chairman of the Department for External Church Relations the metropolitan of Volokolamsk Anthony; the metropolitan of Kazan and Tatarstan Kirill; the director of the administrative secretariat of the Moscow Patriarchy the archbishop of Odintsovo Thomas; the archbishop of Yegorievsk Matthew; the bishop of Zheleznogorsk and Lgov Paisius; the bishops of the delegation of the Serbian Orthodox Church - the bishop of Bačka Irinej; the bishop of Upper Karlovac Gerasim; the bishop of Valjevo Isihije; the bishop of Remesiana Stefan; the bishop of Jegra Nektarije and the bishop of Toplica Petr.

Also concelebrating with the primates were: the secretary to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia for the city of Moscow protopresbyter Vladimir Divakov; the sacristan of the Christ the Saviour Cathedral archpriest Mikhail Ryazantsev; personal secretary to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia archimandrite Alexei (Turikov); the secretary to the Patriarch of Serbia archpriest George Stoislavlevic; the representative of the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia to the Patriarchal Throne of Moscow archimandrite Seraphim (Shemyatovsky); the brother of bishop Anthony and cleric of the Šabac diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church archpriest Milan Pantelic; the representative of the Orthodox Church in America in Moscow archpriest Daniel Andrejuk; advisor to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia archpriest Nikolai Balashov; cleric of the metochion of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Moscow the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul by the Yauza Gates archimandrite Alexander (Kotov); deputy chairman of the DECR archpriest Nikolai Lischenyuk; deputy chairman of the DECR and rector of the Church of the Resurrection at Saint Daniel’s Estate archpriest Igor Yakimchuk; priests and deacons of the delegation of the Serbian Orthodox Church and clergy from the city of Moscow.

Attending the service in the church were: the chairman of the State Duma Federal Assembly committee for property and land ownership S. A. Gavrilov; the Serbian ambassador to Russia Momcilo Babic; the Serbian minister for labour and social welfare Nikola Selakovic; chairman of the Peoples’ Party of Serbia Nenad Popovic; and the president of the International Foundation for the Spiritual Unity of Peoples professor V. A. Alexeyev.

Praying at the service were the relatives and friends of the late bishop, including his mother, sister and niece who had arrived from Serbia.

The hymns for the Divine Liturgy were sung by the Patriarchal Choir of the Christ the Saviour Cathedral

under the direction of I. B. Tolkachev. The liturgical exclamations were given in both Church Slavonic and Serbian.

The TV stations Spas and Soyuz, as well as the official website of the Russian Orthodox Church patriarchia.ru transmitted the service.

At the Litany of Fervent Supplication special petitions were made and the primate of the Russian Orthodox Church read the prayer for Holy Russia.

At the Litany of the Departed special prayers were said for the repose of the soul of the newly-departed servant of God His Holiness the Patriarch of Bulgaria Neophyte and the newly-departed bishop of Moravica Anthony.

The sermon before holy communion on bishop Anthony's ministry to the church was delivered by archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, rector of the Church of the Resurrection in Saint Daniel's Estate and deputy chairman of the DECR of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Then His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and His Holiness the Patriarch of Serbia Profirije conducted the burial service for the bishop of Moravica Anthony.

Before the funeral service began, the primate of the Russian Orthodox Church delivered a homily dedicated to the memory of bishop Anthony.

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We are today gathered to accompany on the path that awaits us all our brother Anthony, who all those in Moscow who regularly visit her churches knew well. The late bishop served here as representative of the Serbian Church, prayed with us, and we all loved and respected him.

When we use the word 'love', we imagine to ourselves all sorts of things by this word. Yet in reality love is closely connected to how we perceive a human being whom we love. It is impossible to love and not trust, it is impossible to love and be suspicious, it is impossible to love and seek an alternative to love. People who are married know well that if these principles of love are violated, then the marriage disintegrates. If we are speaking of Christian love, of love for one another, and yet make our sin part of this love, our failure to understand, our suspicious nature, then love will remain merely a word, while in deed it disappears.

Why am I saying this? Because today we are accompanying on the path that awaits us all our brother

Anthony, the worthy representative of the Serbian Orthodox Church who devoted all his life to Russia, to the Church of Russia, and whom we truly did love. And in speaking of love, I would like to add that love can never be one-sided: this type of love is always unhappy and eventually disintegrates. Love for the departed bishop was truly requited. He loved the Russian Church, he loved the Russian people, and we felt the sincerity of this love. And of course, in response to this we in turn loved him, respected him, and valued him as a worthy representative of the fraternal Serbian Church.

It is difficult to imagine that he is no longer with us physically, here on earth. But there can be no doubt that today he is alongside us and I hope he will abide in the memory of the church, at least while that generation who knew the dear bishop still lives.

The departed, unlike the living, requires nothing from us other than our prayerful memory of him. I call upon all those present today, both clergy and laity, to commemorate the newly-departed His Grace Bishop Anthony in their prayers. Both in their prayers at home and in prayer slips when they are passed on for commemoration at the Divine Liturgy. Together with the names of your relatives and friends, please include the name of bishop Anthony, who has merited our prayerful commemoration through his love for Russia, for the Russian Church and through his remarkable endeavours both in the land of Russia and in his native Serbia.

Through the prayers of the saints of God who have shone forth in the churches of Russia and Serbia may the Lord rest the soul of his newly-departed servant Anthony, our brother, and may he preserve within our hearts our prayerful memory of him. Amen.”

The office of the funeral service was celebrated in both Church Slavonic and Serbian.

According to tradition His Holiness Patriarch Kirill read aloud the prayer of absolution.

The primates of the Russian and Serbian churches then placed bouquets of white roses into the coffin.

Bishop Anthony will be buried on the territory of the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul by the Yauza Gates, which serves as the metochion of the Serbian Orthodox Church (Petropavlovsky per. 4-6), wh ere the representative of the Patriarch of Serbia to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia served for twenty-two years.

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