

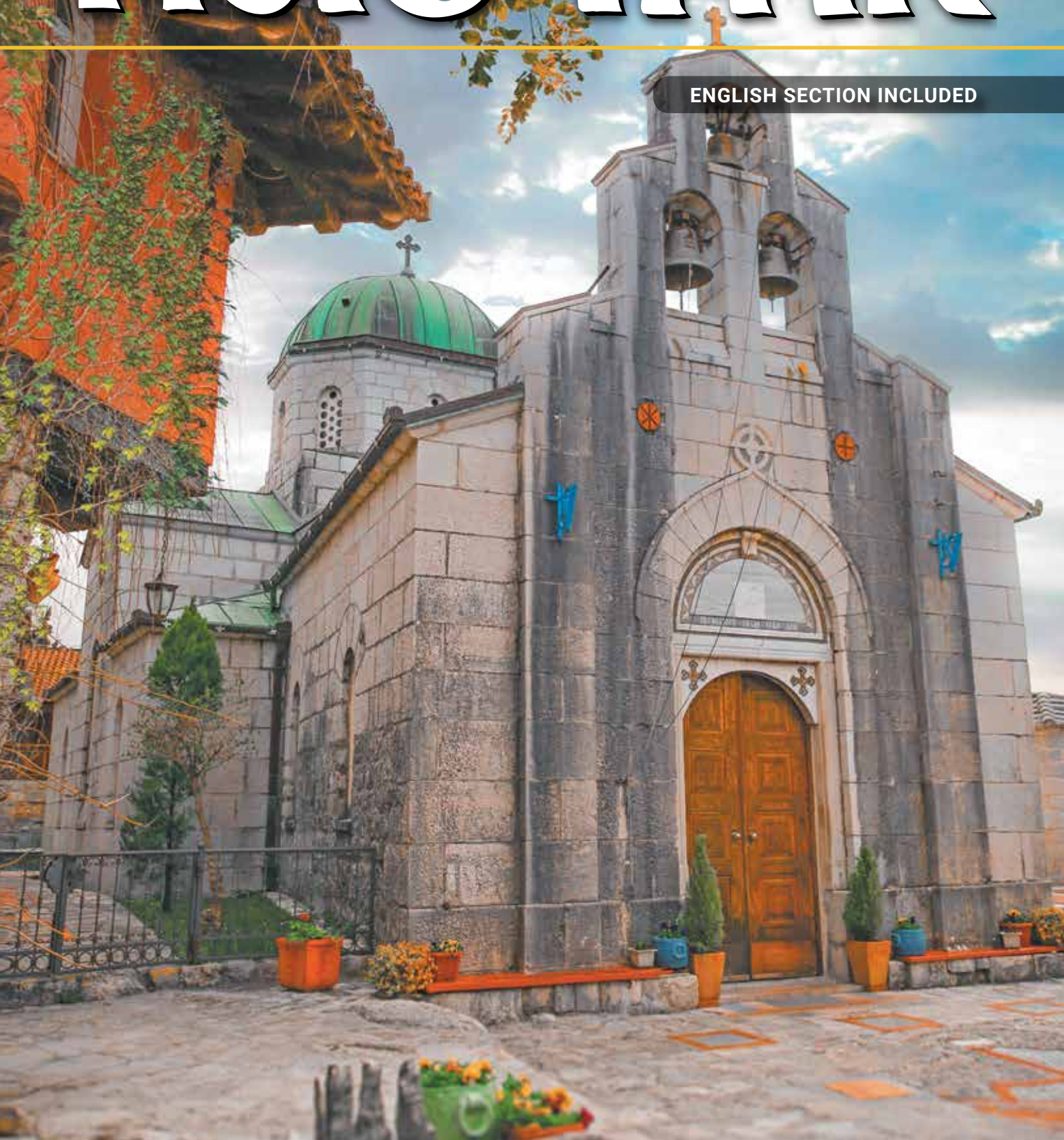
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# ИСТОЧНИК

ENGLISH SECTION INCLUDED



# SAINT JUSTIN POPOVIĆ

## Remembering a great luminary of our Church

*Draga Dragašević*

Three hierarchs in our Serbian Orthodox Church history are loved and respected for their erudition, theology and the rich legacies of faith which they left to our Church and people and to the Orthodox world. First and foremost among them is Saint Sava, patron saint of the Serbs and founder of our Church some 800 years ago. The second is Saint Nikolaj Velimirović, the New Chrysostom whose oratory skills, prolific writing and profound insight into Orthodox theology comforted the suffering Serbian people. The third and lesser known of the three, but also a champion of the Orthodox faith, is Saint Justin Popović, the New Philosopher who left a treasury of Orthodox liturgical and dogmatic texts. Why is his name not as well known among Serbs? In order to introduce his life, martyrdom and spiritual bequests, this article is a tribute to him on the occasion of the 130th anniversary of his birth and the 45th anniversary of his repose in the Lord.

### Young Blagoje

Justin Popović was born March 25/April 7, 1894 on the Feast of the Annunciation when the Archangel Gabriel told the Virgin Mary the Good News that she had been chosen by God to bear His Son who would come into the world to save His people. Spiridon and Anastasija, Justin's pious parents, christened their son "Blagoje" because this

feast date on the Church calendar is called "Blagovesti" (Good News) in Serbian. He had a brother Stojadin and a sister Stojna. Indeed, Blagoje's birth into this humble family in Vranje, Southern Serbia was "good news" for the family and proved to be a blessing for our Serbian people and Church.



The Popović family gave the Church seven generations of priests, so it is no surprise that Blagoje learned the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ at an early age and attended the Divine Liturgy at the 11th century Saint Prohor Pčinjski Monastery located in a village south of Vranje. When his mother prayed to the saint and was healed of a terrible disease this left a deep impression on the young Blagoje which contributed to determining the direction of his life.

According to Father Daniel M. Rogich, author of the biography Saint Justin Popović: The New Philosopher, His Life and Service, Blagoje was so stimulated by the Bible that he carried the New Testament in his pocket wherever he went and faithfully read three chapters daily. By 1905 at the age of 11 he commenced a nine-year program of studies at the Saint Sava Theological Faculty in Belgrade, far away from home. His deep and abiding love for Jesus Christ, the God-man, was the primary reason for his commitment to a monastic life.

### From student to monk

In Belgrade Blagoje met numerous renowned theology professors and composer Stevan Mokranjac. But the most distinguished professor was Hieromonk and Archimandrite Nikolaj Velimirović who became Blagoje's beloved mentor and confessor. It was here that he also met Milan Djordjević (1894-1952), his lifelong friend and fellow monk who was later Bishop Irinej of Dalmatia.

By the time Blagoje completed his studies at the age of 20, World War I was raging, his parents' health was deteriorating, and his hopes to become a monk were temporarily dashed by the tumult of the time. Instead, he served as a nurse in a military hospital in Southern Serbia and Kosovo and Metohija. Together with the Serbian people he endured

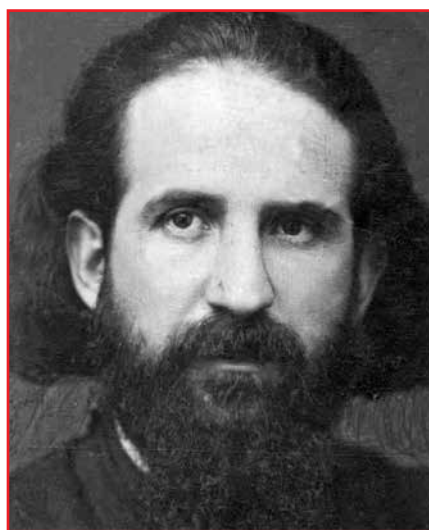
the treacherous trek through the Montenegrin and Albanian mountains in the winter of 1915-1916, often referred to as the Albanian Golgotha, the Great Serbian Retreat or Serbian Golgotha. He travelled the path from Peć to Skadar *[orthodoxwiki]*. Wikipedia describes the tragedy in these words:

“To escape the invaders' [German, Austro-Hungarian and Bulgarian forces] encirclement, on November 23, 1915, the Government and Supreme Command made the joint decision to retreat across the mountains of Montenegro and Albania. The objective was to reach the Adriatic coast, where they would re-organise and re-equip the Serbian Army with assistance from the Allies. The Serbs then retreated across the mountains in three columns; the retreat took the remnants of the army, the King [Petar I], hundreds of thousands of civilian refugees, and war prisoners.

Between November 1915 and January 1916... 77,455 soldiers and 160,000 civilians froze, starved to death, died of disease, or were killed by enemy raids. Austrian pilots used the new technology of the time, dropping bombs on the retreating columns in what has been called ‘the first aerial bombardment of civilians’. Out of the 400,000 people... on the journey, only 120,000 soldiers and 60,000 civilians reached the Adriatic coast to be evacuated by Allied ships to the island of Corfu.... Another 11,000 Serbs would later die of disease, malnutrition, or exposure sustained during the retreat. In some sources published following the conflict, the event was described as the greatest and most tragic episode of the Great War”

*[wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\_Retreat\_(Serbia)]*.

The Great Serbian Retreat is only one chapter in the Serbian tragedy. The 1919 Peace Conference in Versailles confirmed that Serbia had lost more than 1,250,000 people - over 28% of its population, the highest number proportionate to total population of any country in the war. These numbers also meant that 62% of the male population was lost *[wikipedia.org/wiki/World\_War\_I\_casualties]*.

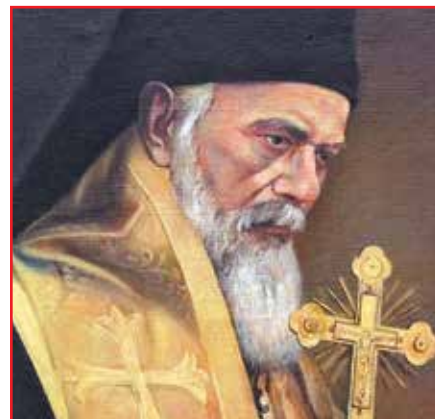


Needless to say, a tragedy of such epic proportions left a deep imprint on Blagoje's soul. Fortunate to be among the survivors, at the end of his journey he was tonsured as a monk at the Skadar Orthodox Cathedral *[orthodoxwiki]*. The solemnity of the moment would have been magnified by the proximity of the graves of martyrs with whom he had travelled the path of agony. He received the monastic name Justin after Saint Justin the Philosopher (c. 100-168), one of the earliest apologists for the faith martyred for his powerful arguments in defense of Christianity *[orthodoxwiki.org]*. Interestingly, his monastic name was a prescient gift because the trajectory of his life paralleled that of his namesake in some ways.

## Seminaries and Universities

Metropolitan Dimitrije Pavlović, later Patriarch of the Serbian Church, sent Justin and other newly tonsured monks to study at the Saint Petersburg Theological Academy in Russia where Justin observed the depth of Russian asceticism and spirituality and the piety of the ordinary people. During his studies he was engrossed in the religious thought of Fyodor Dostoevsky with whose philosophy he agreed.

More trouble in the world, this time the Bolshevik Revolution, prevented further studies in Russia and the theology students were compelled to depart for London. Encouraged by his mentor Hieromonk Nikolaj Velimirović, Justin commenced studies at Oxford University's Faculty of Philosophy from 1916-1919 where he wrote his doctoral dissertation, “The Philosophy and Religion of F. M. Dostoevsky”. Oxford rejected his doctorate “because of its radical criticism of Western humanism, rationalism, Roman Catholicism” and humanocentrism *[wikipedia.org/Justin\_Popovich]*. Nikolaj, however, agreed with both Dostoevsky and Justin saying that western scientific and evolutionary theories had eroded spirituality and devotion to the Church and would ultimately accelerate the growth of atheism and another war. His prediction was proven correct.



The Oxford door had closed for monk Justin, but another had opened at the Saint Arsenije Sremac Theological Seminary in Sremski Karlovci where he had accepted a teaching position. It was there that the new journal *Hrišćanski život* (Christian Life) was established in 1922. Edited initially by his friend, then Deacon Irinej Djordjević, it was continued by Justin Popović until its final issue in 1927. In that journal his Oxford doctoral dissertation first saw the light of day in 1923 to wide acclaim as a sterling study of Dostoevsky, the great Russian author. A few years later when Patriarch Dimitrije sent him to the Faculty of Theology at the University of Athens he completed a second doctoral dissertation on Saint Macarius of Egypt.

Following his tenure as professor from 1927 to 1930 at the Theological Academy of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Prizren, Kosovo and Metohija, the Holy Synod sent Father Justin to assist Bishop Josif Cvijović of Bitola from 1930 to 1932 in re-organizing the Church of the Carpatho-Russians in Czechoslovakia. Believers in that region had espoused Uniatism and were wanting to convert back to their Orthodox roots. The Uniate churches were formerly Orthodox which had come under the jurisdiction of Rome while retaining Orthodox rituals and canon law. Father Justin devoted much effort to this undertaking [*orthodoxwiki/Justin\_Popovich*].

Before World War II Pope Pius XI proposed a Concordat between the Vatican and the Kingdom of Serbia to ensure privileges for the Roman Catholic Church within the state. The Serbian Orthodox Church

deemed that this would give Rome preferential treatment in Serbia. Justin also assessed this as an effort to subordinate the Serbian Orthodox Church and vehemently opposed it.

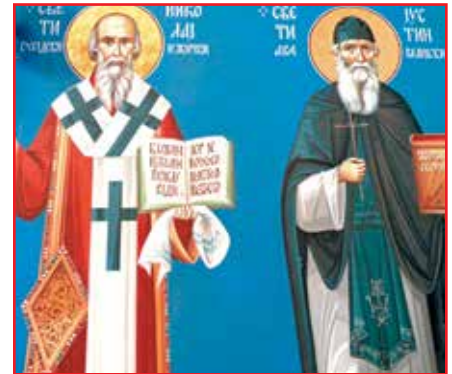
### Nikolaj and Justin

Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović and Father Justin Popović were the two most powerful voices of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the 20th century. Both adhered to the traditional teachings of the Early Church Fathers, the lives of the Orthodox saints, and Scripture. Very intelligent, articulate and deeply devoted to Christ, these two theological giants presented the Christ-centred Orthodox faith to a fallen world. They “spoke truth in love” [*Rogich, p. 13*]. As Justin once said: “We do not cease to emphasize that the Holy Fathers were the best thinkers of the Church through the Holy Spirit” [*Artemije, p. 33*]. Both mourned the fate of the Serbian people and, like Saint Sava, made every effort to teach them the ways of the Lord.

Justin found comfort in the Bogomoljački pokret (Prayer Movement) founded by Bishop Nikolaj, ardent believers who gathered to pray wherever they could, to receive the Holy Eucharist often, and to witness for the Lord. And both Nikolaj and Justin were that “living water” who could guide them to a deeper life in Christ.

The Serbian people loved the spiritual songs written by Bishop Nikolaj. They were simple, melodic, and yet enlightening, didactic and powerful. His “duhovna lira” (spiritual songs) were songs about Christ, the Holy Theotokos, the Cross, Saint Sava, angels, heavenly Serbia, and more. He taught the people to praise God in the language they spoke, and

this inspired Justin to translate the Divine Liturgy directly from Greek into vernacular Serbian.



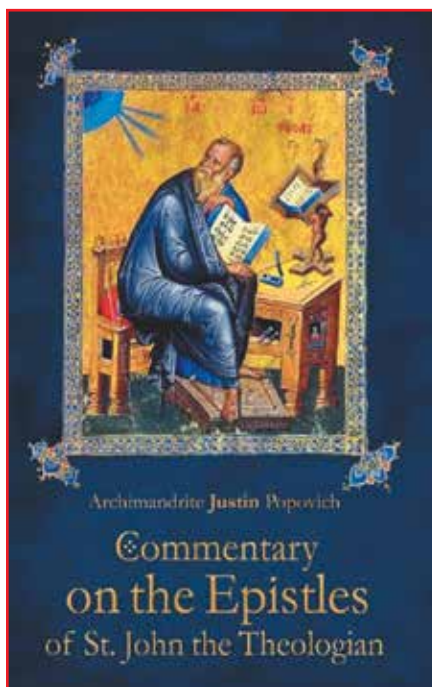
Justin was the first to address Nikolaj as a saint, always crowning him with the title “Holy Bishop Nikolaj”. He delivered heartfelt and edifying tributes to Nikolaj at annual memorial services from 1956 until his own death in 1979. The then Bishop Artemije wrote: “Father Justin painted the first icon, not made by hands, of the Holy Bishop Nikolaj in the souls of the pious Serbian faithful with his prayers, and especially his sermons, an icon of the Serbian Evangelist, Serbian Apostle, Serbian Confessor, Serbian Martyr, Serbian Prophet...” [*Artemije, p. 46*].

Justin lovingly describes Nikolaj’s magnum opus - The Prologue of Ohrid - his important compilation of lives of saints, hymns, reflections, and homilies for every day of the year, in this way: “His words are, indeed, spirit and life to us Serbs.... He resurrected the Serbian nation... the Serbian soul unto eternal life, eternal truth, eternal love and eternal joy.... The Prologue of Ohrid is a holy handbook, the most essential reference book, a holy instruction book for every Serbian soul.... It offers you holy medicines for every sin of yours and a holy virtue for every passion...” [*Artemije, p. 69, 71*].

## Treasury of Writings

While at the Saint Clement of Ohrid Seminary in Bitola in 1931, Justin began writing his monumental work *The Dogmas of the Orthodox Church* in three volumes. The first volume published in 1932 addressed the nature of God, the Holy Trinity, Creation and Divine Providence. It earned him a professorship in 1934 at the Saint Sava Theological Faculty in Belgrade, his alma mater, where he taught until the end of World War II. Volume two was released in 1936 covering *The God-man and His Work: Christology and Soteriology*. The third volume *Ecclesiology: Teaching on the Church* was released only in 1970. This three-volume magnum opus is “the most exhaustive and thorough treatment of Orthodox Christian truth available in the world today. What John of Damascus did in the 8th century, Justin matched in the 20th” [*Rogich*, p. 21].

In 1938, while he was teaching at the University of Belgrade, Father



Justin joined other prominent academics to found the Serbian Philosophical Society. This gave him the venue to contribute articles to many philosophical periodicals. During World War II Justin also “collaborated with other scholars on the Memorandum of the Serbian Orthodox Church documenting the suffering of the Serbs at the hands of the Ustaše in the Independent State of Croatia” from 1941-1945 [*Rogich*, p.23].

According to Asterios Gerostergios [p. 18-19], among Father Justin’s many other published works are: *The Theory and Knowledge of Saint Isaac the Syrian* (1927); *Dostoevsky, Europe and the Slavic World* (1940); *The Philosophy of Life according to Saint Sava* (1955); *The Lives of Saint Sava and Saint Simeon* (1962); *The Man and the God-Man*; *The Orthodox Church and Ecumenism* (1974); *The Lives of the Saints of the Orthodox Church* in 12 volumes (1972-1974); *The Life of Saint Basil of Ostrog the Wonderworker*; *The Life of Tsar Lazar*; translations of the

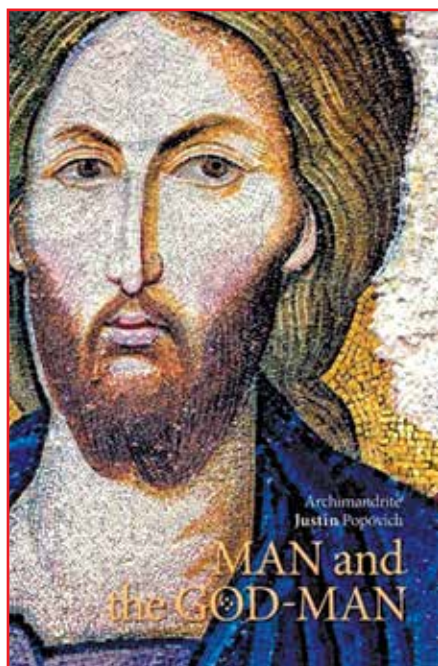
Liturgies of Saint Basil the Great, Saint John Chrysostom, and Saint Gregory the Dialogist from the original Greek into Serbian; commentaries on the New Testament, homilies, akathist hymns, a devotional prayer book, and countless articles on theological subjects. Some of his writings have been translated into English, Greek, French, and Russian. Father Justin was truly a gift to the Orthodox world.

## Injustice to a just man

Bishop Nikolaj, was interned by the German occupiers in 1941 and transferred to the Dachau concentration camp from 1944 to the end of the war. While he suffered spiritually and physically, he never stopped praying for his people, his country and the world. Once the communists grabbed power he could never return to his beloved Serbia and so he was compelled to continue his missionary and church work in the USA and Canada. Thankfully, with his prolific pen he pressed on to produce more theological masterpieces until his repose in 1956.

Justin’s friend, Bishop Irinej Djordjević, faced a similar fate. Interned in an Italian camp from 1941 to 1945, he emigrated to the US and later to England.

But Justin was destined to remain in Serbia and endure persecution under Tito’s communist rule. Deemed “ineligible” by the Serbian communists, he was expelled from his teaching position at the University of Belgrade in 1945, arrested, imprisoned as an “enemy of the state” and faced a firing squad! The communist authorities “demanded that he recant his beliefs and his Svetosavian ideology” - which, of course, he did not [*Rogich*,



p. 23]. The zealous temper of the communists would not tolerate a zealous Christian whose peaceful demeanor swayed even atheists to come to Christ. Denied his human, civil and religious rights, Justin wandered for two years from monastery to monastery because none was allowed to receive him.

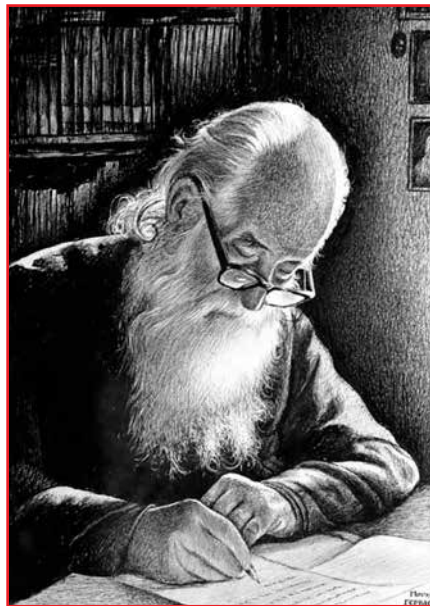


Providence intervened in 1948 when the brave Abbess Sarah agreed to receive him at the Ćelije Monastery near Valjevo where he remained “confined” for over 30 years until his repose on March 25/April 7, 1979. For three decades he was under surveillance by the communist secret police, interrogated, spied on and persecuted. He lived there as a priest, celebrating the Divine Liturgy, praying ceaselessly, fasting and meditating.

His hardship escalated when the local people of Vranje, his hometown, treated him with hostility, possibly because they genuinely opposed him or because they feared communist wrath. In their anti-Christian, anti-Orthodox and anti-Serbian fervour the communists demolished the Popović family home in 1964, undeterred by Father Justin’s protests. During these trials he was never abandoned by the Lord or by the brave nuns of Ćelije who affectionately called him “Ava Justin”. He became the Archimandrite of the monastery.

Fifteen years after his death, the repentant people of Vranje tried “to rectify the injustice done to him... when in 1994 a memorial bust of Ava Justin was erected in the city park in Vranje, and on the same day the foundation stone for the reconstruction of the ruined family home... was laid. Today, the All Orthodox Centre ‘Venerable Justin of Ćelije and Vranje’ is located in this house” [novosti].

As a consequence of his internment Justin, the great defender of Orthodoxy, was never permitted to visit the Monastery Hilandar on Mount Athos. Although he never set foot on that sacred soil, an icon of him was written there in the Skete of Saint Andrew [Rogich, p. 28]. In spirit, he is there.



Although his incarceration at the hands of the Serbian communists deprived the Serbian people of learning from him in church, listening to his lectures, and reading his texts, the stillness of Ćelije was also a gift. He devoted the years to translating “patristic and hagiographic writings

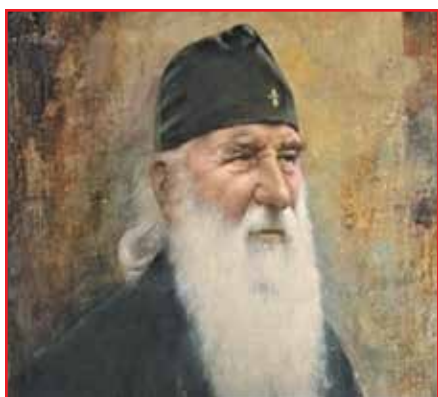
and exegesis of the New Testament” [novosti] and writing 40 volumes as a testament to the glory of Christ, a rich legacy which he left to the people and to Orthodoxy, along with the school of iconography which he established at the monastery. During those three decades of confinement only four of his articles appeared in the Serbian press and only two in the diaspora. Students, clergy, monastics and ordinary people came to him for confession and guidance, to fill their spirits with his wisdom. He had essentially disappeared from the Serbian conscience and the public eye. His writings became known to the wider public in Serbia only in the 1990s.

### Justin’s Spirituality

Father Justin’s unceasing prayers to Jesus were pronounced by tears, a trait call “umilenije” [Rogich, p. 17] or the “gift of tears” from the Holy Spirit. This tender blessing made him more humble, more compassionate toward all creation. It was this humility that attracted many to come to him for guidance, prayers, and healing. When he was ordained into the priesthood in 1922 by Patriarch Dimitrije he cried throughout the entire service.

Father Justin’s tears flowed freely at every Divine Liturgy. He received the Holy Eucharist every day - the Precious Body and Blood of the Lord, the source of his life’s work and purpose. And his tears.

For his outstanding work in Czechoslovakia Bishop Josif petitioned the Holy Synod in 1932 that he be consecrated as bishop, but the humble Justin gracefully refused saying that he was not worthy, that he



was having difficulty caring for his own soul let alone shepherding his flock. And yet, he was confessor to many, including some who became bishops. Among them was Patriarch Pavle and three of his most prominent students who became well known bishops of the Church: Amfilohije Radović, Artemije Radosavljević and Atanasije Jevtić.

Those who knew him testified that his love and benevolence extended to believers and non-believers [*Gerostrongios, p.15*]. He lived the Scripture and the lessons of the Church Fathers. His extensive education helped him compare “the philosophy of the world” and the “philosophy of the Holy Spirit” [*Gerostrongios, p. 15*], always with Christ at the centre of his teachings, his life, and the essence of his being.

### **Selected excerpts from Justin’s Writings**

In the book *Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ* the compilers offer several of Father Justin’s works. For the reader’s edification, here are a few excerpts.

#### **From “The Inward Mission of the Church”**

[p. 22-23]: “...if at one time man did have this sense of immortality... it has since been wasted away by death.... Only in Christ, in Him

alone, did man feel himself immortal and know himself eternal. Christ God-human, in His Person, bridged that chasm between time and eternity and restored relations between them.... Whereby, for man and for humanity, Christ composes the one and only passage and transition from time to eternity.... The ever-living personality of God-human Christ is precisely the Church.... The Mission of the Church is to make every one of her faithful... one with the Person of Christ, to turn their sense of self into a sense of Christ, and their self-knowledge into Christ-knowledge, for their life to become the life in Christ and for Christ... that within them might live not they themselves, but Christ in them” [*Galatians 2:20*].

[p. 26-28]: “First among the ascetic virtues is the effort of faith... for someone to believe in Christ, entails their waiting on Christ, and only on Christ, with every event of their lives....

The second ascetic virtue is the God-human virtue of prayer and fasting... the way of life of our Orthodox people, being the soul of their souls... the all-powerful, Christ-given means of purging... every defilement....

The third God-human virtue is that of love... which knows no bounds, which does not question who is worthy and who is not, but loves them all; loving friends and enemies, loving sinners and evildoers without, however, loving their sins and their crimes. It blesses the accursed, and as the sun does, it shines both on the evil and the good.... [*Matthew 5:45-46*].

The fourth ascetic virtue is the God-human virtue of meekness and humility.... Only he who is lowly in

heart can humble proud and haughty souls. To be showing all meekness unto all men is the obligation of every truthful Christian [*Titus 3:2*].... The soul of the people must be rendered meek by Christ’s meekness.... Humble yourself lower than them all: be all things to all men, but be of Christ and according to Christ. When you are by yourself, then pray: O humble Lord, by your humility, humble me...!

The fifth ascetic virtue is the God-human virtue of patience and humility which is to say, to endure ill use, not to render evil for evil, to forgive in total compassion all assault, slander and hurt. This is what it is to be of Christ: to feel yourself perpetually crucified to the world, persecuted by it, violated and spat upon. The world will not tolerate Christ-bearing men just as it would not tolerate Christ.... Being Christian does not simply mean to bear suffering cheerfully, but to pardon in compassion those who cause it, to pray to God for them as did Christ and the archdeacon Stephen....”

#### **From “Introduction to the Lives of the Saints”**

[p. 34]: “... a man’s real life begins with his faith in the Lord Christ which commits all his soul, heart... and strength to the Lord Christ, Who gradually sanctifies, transfigures, and deifies them.... Our life is life inasmuch as it is in Christ... the holier a life, the more immortal and more eternal it is”.

[p. 35-36]: “Without the Resurrection of Christ human life is nothing else but a gradual dying... which ends in death.... Life is real life only

in God, for it is a holy life and by virtue of this an immortal life.... The Saints are the most perfect Christians, for they have been sanctified to the highest degree with the holy faith in the risen and eternally living Lord Christ and no death has power over them”.

[p. 41]: “The Lives of the Saints are holy testimonies of the miraculous power of our Lord Jesus Christ.... They are the testimonies of the Acts of the Apostles, only continued throughout the ages”.

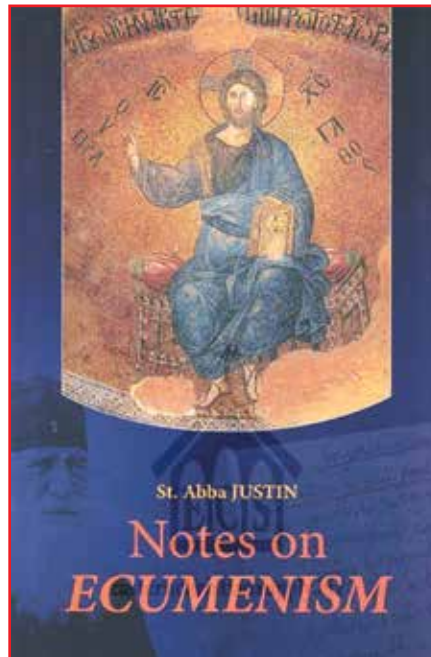
[p. 42]: “And who are the Christians? Christians are those through whom the holy Divine human life of Christ is continued from generation to generation until the end of the world and of time, and they all make up one body, the Body of Christ - the Church”.

### From “Highest Value and Last Criterion in Orthodoxy”

[p. 68-69]: “Creating man according to his image, God diffused into man’s very being the longing for the divine infinitude of life, of knowledge, and of perfection. It is precisely for this reason the immeasurable longing and thirst of humanity is not able to be completely satisfied by anything or anyone except God.... With his pure humanity alone... without God, he is incapable of correcting his spirit and of restoring his divine-like being. In all his humanistic longings, man is, in fact, crying out for the God-man”.

[p.75]: “The entire life of Christ, both before and after His Resurrection, is evident proof that He is the personification of immortality and

eternal life and, therefore, the master over death. By His Resurrection He insured for human nature victory over death, and by His Ascension immortal life in the eternity of the Triune God. For this reason, He alone among the human race is justified in saying: I am the Resurrection and the life” [John 11:25].



### From “Humanistic Ecumenism”

[p. 177-179]: “The heretical people of our time gave Christ the Lord the last place at the table of this world, as though He is the least of beggars, while they placed their own great men in the first seats.... The eyes of this people were fixed upon these great men, these modern gods, while only a few eyes were turned to Christ, the conqueror of death. This shameless rebellion of this baptized but heretical people against the Most High God had to be, of necessity, followed by a reaction of the scorned God against these lawless people and nations.... And they changed the glory of the incorrupt-

ible God into an image made like unto corruptible man... and they worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator”.

[p. 182]: “God, however, cannot be mocked by all this. Whenever people, as guests, become too impudent at the table of God, a warning has to come from the master of the house. Two terrible warnings have been given to today’s generations, two world wars in a period of two decades”.

[p. 188, 191-193]: “The proper thing for Europe to do would be to boast about its Christianity and its great value as its most priceless inheritance.... Christ says to Europe that it was baptized in His name and it should remain faithful to Him and His Gospel.... Europe mockingly shouts: Get away from us. We do not recognize you. You are only an old myth our grandmothers and grandfathers believed in.... With tears in His eyes, Christ says: Behold, now I am leaving, but you will see. You have left God’s road.... Blessings and happiness have been taken away from you....”

### From “Selective Writings of Father Justin”

[p. 217]: “The entire Old Testament was... a shadow of the God Logos. As an enormous shadow precedes the body, in the same way the whole world was walking before Him.... All of the visible world is nothing but a shadow which indicates beforehand and announces the body that comes behind it, the incarnation of the God Logos”.

[p. 218]: “What are our traditions? Everything which was delivered to the Apostles by the Saviour



Christ and the Holy Spirit constitutes exactly... the Holy Tradition, the whole teaching of the Saviour.... The Tradition is in part written, while the most part was given orally, but... all constitute the Divine Revelation... the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of salvation....”

### A Saint Reposed in the Lord

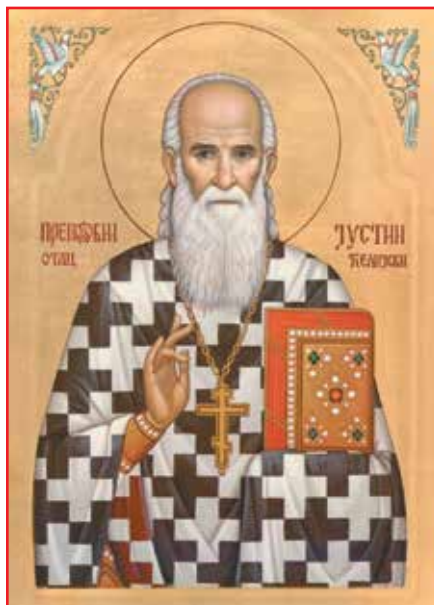
Father Justin Popović reposed in the Lord on March 25/April 7, 1979, on his 85th birthday. Blessed by the Lord, the Annunciation was the date of his birth and his death, connecting him in life and in death with the Holy Theotokos.

His funeral was attended by hundreds of believers. During his lifetime miracles were reported, and after his death healings, divine light and conversions have occurred at his gravesite and through his intercessions.

On May 2, 2010 the Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church glorified Ava Justin of Ćelije into

sainthood and assigned June 1/14 for his commemoration. To this day, 130 years after his birth and 45 years after his repose, eulogies are read in his homeland and all over the Orthodox world at memorial services to this great disciple of Christ, faithful student of his predecessors Saint Sava and Saint Nikolaj, and loyal son of Serbia. Many beautiful prayers of praise, kontakions and akathist hymns dedicated to the Venerable Saint Justin Popović can be found in Father Rogich's book.

After decades of communist persecution, pernicious policies and



efforts to silence this holy man, humble theologian and outstanding scholar, his example and his teachings have outlived communist hatred. Saint Justin now stands victorious before the God-man he loved so deeply! The Lord be exalted!

### Kontakion

We proclaim to the faithful the inexhaustible fount conveying the Orthodox doctrines, and an angel-like man full of divine zeal, the

divine Justin, the offspring of the Serbs, who by his sound teachings and writings hath strengthened the faith of all in the Lord.

### Eulogy

At his funeral in 1979 Hieromonk and later Metropolitan Amfilohije Radović concluded his moving eulogy to his mentor and father confessor with these words:

“We send you off and remain poorer for one saint. But you are leaving and with your presence you are enriching heavenly Serbia, you are going there where your God is whom you faithfully served, there where His Apostles are, all the holy sons of our nation and all the saints.... You fought the good fight and finished the race. Therefore, help us with your holy prayers and your intercession before the throne of the God of Glory that we will repent, that we will understand and fulfill your trust and your message. That we uphold your life! That we become heralds of your faith and your message. That we return to the paths of Saint Sava and Saint Simeon Nemanjić, the great martyr Saint



Lazar of Kosovo, Saint Petar of Cetinje, miracle worker Saint Vasilije of Ostrog, and all the saints pleasing to God.... Pray to God for the whole world and for this nation that they may find their way as you found your way, that they may find their souls again as you found yours, that they may again find the heart of their hearts, Christ the God-man, just as you found Him. And then we would all celebrate together with you: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and to the ages of ages. Amen" [Amfilohije].

### Three Altar Church in Ćelije

On September 9/22, 2019 on the feast day of Saints Joachim and Anna, the parents of the Holy Theotokos and grandparents of Christ, and in honour of 800 years of autocephaly of the Serbian Orthodox Church, the 125th anniversary since the birth and 40 years since the death of Saint Justin, a new complex was consecrated at Ćelije monastery with a three-altar church dedicated to Saint Sava, Saint Mary of Egypt and Saint Justin whose relics were transferred there from the

original small monastery church. Part of the relics of Saint Nektarios of Greece are also preserved in the church. The 13th century Ćelije Monastery, classified as a cultural monument of great importance under the protection of the government of Serbia, stands as a memorial to a 20th century martyred Serbian saint who abided in the Lord to his final breath.

### Rejoice!

As we rejoice and celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ Whose Precious Body and

Blood Saint Justin received into his own body every day of his life, let us give thanks for the holy man who was among us, who was almost forgotten and eliminated, but by God's mighty hand was preserved to teach us His word and the ways of the Lord. His birth on the Annunciation was celebrated on earth and his death on the Annunciation was celebrated in heaven where he, too, is rejoicing with the Resurrected Lord Whom he served all his days. Let us honour him and venerate his icon. We entreat you, Saint of God, Saint Justin, pray to God for us!



**Christ is risen! Glorify Him, the Creator and Saviour!**

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