



SERBIAN PATRIARCH

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Belgrade

Greeting letter from His Holiness the Serbian Patriarch Kyr Porfirije on the occasion of the jubilee, the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Holy Trinity Theological Seminary in Jordanville, United States of America

Your Graces, Your Excellencies...

On the occasion of the great jubilee – 75 years since the founding of the Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary, a school that, in the spirit of Orthodox Tradition, has educated a large number of bishops, clergy, theologians, missionaries, and workers in the field of church education over the past decades, it is Our honor, in Our own name and on behalf of the pleroma of the Serbian Orthodox Church, to send you heartfelt greetings and Our best prayerful wishes so that in the times ahead, your esteemed educational institution may continue to educate generations of Church workers and seekers of God in the Spirit and Truth, to the joy to the entire Orthodox world, and to the glory of the One God in Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the long and fruitful history of Russian ecclesial education, the Holy Trinity Seminary holds a special place. It was founded in 1948, within the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, with the idea of educating future clerics in the traditions of spiritual schools from Imperial Russia. The founder of this school, Archbishop Vitaly Maximenko, a graduate of the Kiev and Kazan theological academies, was well acquainted with these traditions. As a spiritual child of Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky, he knew well that true theological education cannot exist without spirituality and an active liturgical life, which is why he established the school within the confines of the Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville. The merging of academic theology with monastic way of living bore fruit in the form of a large number of significant contributors to various fields of ecclesial life throughout the Russian diaspora.

Using this opportunity to address you on the occasion of this very significant jubilee, I must mention the long and rich tradition of Serbian-Russian cooperation in the field of ecclesial education. The spiritual heritage upon which this school is founded, with its roots in the ecclesial education of Imperial Russia during the

Romanov era, is important for the Serbian Church as well. In the renowned Russian spiritual academies and seminaries during the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, more than 300 Serbs were educated. Among them were future saints, patriarchs, bishops, numerous priests and monks, as well as professors in Serbian theological schools. Saint Nikolaj Velimirović, Saint Justin Popović, Patriarch Varnava Rosić, Saint Mardarije Uskoković, and many others attended Russian spiritual schools. In other words, the theological elite of the Serbian Church received their education primarily in Russian spiritual schools for over two centuries. After the forced closure of spiritual schools in Russia after 1917, it was time for Serbs to repay their debt to their Russian brethren in the field of ecclesial education. The Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Belgrade, which began operating in 1920, was one of the most significant centers of higher theological education for Russian emigrants. Nine Russian professors taught at this faculty, and it was attended by more than 200 Russian students. Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco was among the first generation of students at this faculty. Some of the future professors of the Holy Trinity Spiritual Seminary, such as Bishop Mitrofan Znosko-Borovsky, were also among the Russian students in Belgrade. In Serbia, between the two world wars, the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, led by Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky, had its See. An important part of the life journey of the founder of this school, Archbishop Vitaly Maximenko, is also tied to Serbia and Belgrade. He spent his early emigrant days on Serbian soil, and he received his hierarchical consecration in 1934, at the hands of Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky, precisely in Belgrade.

The long-standing tradition of Serbian-Russian cooperation in the field of ecclesial education, which began in Imperial Russia and continued in Belgrade, was also extended to the Holy Trinity Seminary. From the early years of the existence of this school until the present day, Serbs, mostly those living on the North American continent, have received theological education here. The spiritual and theological permeation of our people in the diaspora, to which this honorable school has greatly contributed, has been and continues to be an important foundation for future fruitful cooperation between our sister Churches and their theological schools, both in the diaspora and in their homelands.

Wishing His Grace the Rector, esteemed Dean, all the professors, and students of the Holy Trinity Seminary blessed success in all their future educational and scholarly endeavors, and God's assistance in achieving their goals, I congratulate you on this great jubilee.



Serbian Patriarch

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