

# Brief Biography of His Holiness PAVLE (1914 – 2009)

The Archbishop of Pec,  
Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovac  
and  
Serbian Patriarch



## **PAVLE** Archbishop of Pec, Metropolitan of Belgrade-Karlovtsy and SERBIAN PATRIARCH

Patriarch PAVLE was born on September 11, 1914, the Feast of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist, and was given the name of Gojko at his baptism. He was born in the village of Kucanci, district of Donji Milanovac, Slavonija to parents who were farmers. Gojko went to elementary school in his native village, graduated from middle school in Tuzla and from high school in Belgrade. He completed a six-year course of studies at the Seminary in Sarajevo and received a graduate degree from the Belgrade University School of Theology. At the onset of World War II, he was mobilized to serve in the Health Corps of the Yugoslav Army. Later, he succeeded in returning to his native Slavonia.

He was ordained to the priesthood as a hieromonk in 1954 and given the monastic name Pavle (Paul). He did post-graduate work at the University of Athens School of Theology from 1955 to 1957. During his studies he focused on the New Testament and liturgics. On his return home, he was elevated to the dignity of archimandrite. On May 29, 1957 he was consecrated bishop of Raska and Prizren. Bishop Pavle was enthroned on October 13, 1957 in the Cathedral of Prizren by the then Bishop of Zica and, subsequently, Patriarch GERMAN and Bishop VLADISLAV of Zahumlje and Herzegovina, later Metropolitan of Dabar and Bosnia.

The new Bishop of Raska and Prizren became engaged in restoring old and partially destroyed churches and in advocating the construction of new churches. He also took care of the ancient Prizren Seminary of Saints Cyril and Methodius founded by Sima Igumanov Prizrenac in 1871, where he lectured on Church Slavonic and liturgics.

In addition to his diocesan duties, Bishop PAVLE published a monograph on the Monastery of Devic consecrated to Saint Joanikije of Devic (1989). From 1972 to 1992 he also published numerous scholarly articles on liturgics in Glasnik Srpski Patrijarsije. These articles attracted the attention of notable scholars in the fields of liturgics, medieval studies, byzantology, philology and art history. He was in charge of the new and expanded edition of Srbljak (service book to Serbian saints), published by the Holy Synod in 1986. It was thanks to the efforts of Bishop PAVLE that we saw the Book of Needs and (for the first time in the Serbian language) the Liturgicon, Prayerbook and the Great Typicon, as well as other service books, published by the Holy Synod of Bishops.

As president of the Commission of the Holy Synod of Bishops on Translations, a Serbian version of the New Testament was published in 1984. He was also instrumental in having the first edition of this translation twice reprinted in an improved and expanded form. He was the president of the Editorial Board of the hugely important monograph Monuments of Kosovo. For his contributions to theology he received a doctoral degree honoris causa from the Belgrade School of Theology in 1988.

The Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church met on December 1, 1990 at the Patriarchate in Belgrade in order to elect the successor of the seriously ill Patriarch GERMAN. At the beginning of the session, Metropolitan VLADISLAV of Dabar and Bosnia acquainted the Assembly with the slate of candidates who had the qualifications required by the Statutes of the Serbian Orthodox Church. There were seventeen qualified candidates. The voting procedure was the following: each member of the Assembly circled the names of three candidates for the short list. In order to be placed on the short list, a candidate must receive the votes of more than half the members of the Assembly, which meant at least thirteen votes. The vote was taken nine times before the short list was completed. On it were the names of Bishop SAVA of Sumadija, Bishop STEFAN of Zica and Bishop PAVLE of Raska and Prizren.

After preparatory prayers, the Most Venerable Archimandrite Antonije Djurdjevic, Abbot of the Monastery of Tronosa, entered the sanctuary of the Patriarchal Chapel consecrated to Saint Simeon the Myrrhobletes, prostrated himself before the altar and venerated the Gospel. Then he removed from the Gospel the three sealed envelopes containing the names of the three candidates on the short list. Selecting one of the envelopes, he gave it to the Metropolitan of Dabar and Bosnia VLADISLAV who opened the envelope and announced that the new Archbishop of Pec, Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovci and the Serbian Patriarch is Bishop PAVLE of Raska and Prizren.

Following the Service of Thanksgiving, Bishop STEFAN of Zica addressed the following words to the Assembly: "For the first time in the history of the Serbian Orthodox Church we have used the apostolic method for the election of the patriarch. As you can see, it was very beneficial. I am crying with joy, because the most holy, the best and the most prayerful among us was chosen to sit on the Throne of Saint Sava. His coming to take the helm of the Serbian Orthodox Church at the time when prayers are so rare, although more needed than ever, is the expression of the will of the Holy Spirit that the Church of Saint Sava become spiritually strengthened."

The provision of this manner of electing the patriarch was added to the Statutes of the Serbian Orthodox Church by the Holy Assembly of Bishops in 1967. Although the reasons for the adoption of this procedure for the election of the patriarch were primarily ecclesiastical in nature, the political aspects of our decision, must never be neglected. In other words, this manner of election protected the Patriarch from secular authorities who frequently meddled in the election. His Holiness Patriarch PAVLE was enthroned as the forty-fourth Serbian Patriarch on Sunday December 2, 1990 in the

Cathedral of Belgrade and he ascended the ancient Patriarchal Throne in the Patriarchate of Pec on May 2, 1994.

With Patriarch PAVLE at the forefront, the Serbian Orthodox Church, while being careful to remain outside of partisan politics, played a major role in the recent changes in Yugoslavia leading to democratization. By appealing to the inner psyche of the Serbian people, Patriarch PAVLE led the Church in calling for a peaceful resolution of conflict, recognition of democratic processes, and for the rule of law. When it became clear that Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and his government would not recognize the Opposition victory, the Church weighed in at the crucial time by being the first to recognize Opposition candidate Vojislav Kostunica as the “president-elect.”