



DIOCESE OF BAČKA

Bačka region is surrounded by the great rivers such as Danube and Tisa from the east, west and south, and in the north its borders cross through Baje via Jankovec to Szeged.



Episcopal palace

The Hungarians came to the Pannonian Plain at the end of the 9th century. The Hungarian state had constant territorial aspirations for the Serbian state. They kept trying to extend to the south because of which the Serbian King Stefan the First-Crowned, brother of Saint Sava entered the war with the Hungarians. This conflict ended with the diplomatic mediation of St. Sava and the signing of peace between the Hungarian King Andras II and Stefan the First-Crowned in Budva in 1220. In one of his archipelagic travels, visiting the northern parts of his Archbishopric, St. Sava used good relations with the Hungarian royal house and founded the Diocese of Bačka, based in Szeged. Until then, the Church in Bačka was under the jurisdiction of the Ohrid Archbishopric. About 1225, St. Sava founded the new monastery in Kovilj as the meta of the Žiča monastery.



Monastery in Kovilj

There is no detailed information about the bishops and the organisation of church life in Bačka since the founding of the Bačka eparchy until the beginning of the 16th century. The first bishop which was known is a metropolitan Segedin Filip, mentioned in 1508. Educational system was established in monasteries back then. The most famous school in Bačka in the second half of the 16th century was in the monastery of Bodjani. The Bodjani monastery was founded in 1438.



Monastery in Bodjani

Bishops of Bačka were: *JEFTIMIJE (DROBNJAK), STEFAN (METOHIJAC), HRISTOFOR DIMITRIJEVIC (MITROVIC), GRIGORIJE (DIMITRIJEVIC), SOFRONIJE (TOMASEVIC), VISARION (PAVLOVIC), MOJSIJE (PUTNIK), ARSENIJE (RADIVOJEVIC), ATANASIJE (ZIVKOVIC), JOSEF (JOVANOVIC SHAKABENTA), JOVAN (JOVANOVIC), GEDEON (PETROVIC), STEFAN (STANKOVIC), GEORGIJE (HRANISLAV), PLATON (ATANACKOVIC), GERMAN (ANGELIC), VASILIJAN (PETROVIC), GERMAN (OPACIC), MITROFAN (SEVIC), IRINEJ (CIRIC), NIKANOR (ILICIC).*

Each bishop contributed to the great development of spiritual life in this Diocese.

In 1731, one of the most significant bishop Visarion (Pavlović) was placed on the throne of our Diocese. After his enthronement in Varadinski Šanac (Novi Sad), bishop Visarion built in the port of the Church of Saint George – The Theotokos School. Today, one of the most significant schools: Gymnasium Jovan Jovanović Zmaj are built on that site.



Bishop Visarion (Pavlović)

Bishop Visarion also opened the first hospital in Novi Sad in 1741, in the port of Church of St. Nicolas. He built the Episcopal residence which was/and is located in the courtyard of today's Zmaj-Jovina gymnasium. This residence was burnt to the ground in the bombing of Novi Sad on June 12, 1849. Bishop Visarion brought together and organised most prominent people of Novi Sad to struggle for acquiring the status of a free town. He retired in Novi Sad on 18 October 1756.



Bishop Platon (Atanacković)

Bishop Platon (Atanacković) received in 1848 the administration of the entire Serbian Orthodox Church in Hungary. Although his diplomatic skills didn't calm the fierce national passions of Serbs and Hungarians. A revenge followed in which on 12 June 1849, Novi Sad survived its greatest starvation in history. Under the pretext that the pontoon bridge must be rescued, Hungarian General Erna Kish shot gunfire from Petrovaradin fortress destroying the Serbian part of the city. The damage was huge: more than 2,000 homes were destroyed. Almaška, Orthodox Cathedral and St. Nicolas Church were damaged. The Episcopal palace with a library, archive and chapel were burnt to the ground. Bishop Platon immediately began rebuilding his destroyed Eparchy.



Bishop Irinej (Ćirić)

The new bishop of Bačka became Irinej (Ćirić) in 1922. For 33 years this great bishop managed the Bačka Diocese. His work was huge. During the Second World War, he organised the rescue of 2,800 Serbs from the Šarvar detention camp and some other prisons in Hungary. After the Second World War, the new authority put him in house arrest for seventeen months. Communist authorities organised several attacks on him. He was beaten up during his visit in Odzaci, in 1946. After a long illness, on April 5, 1955, he passed away in Novi Sad, where he was buried in the crypt of the Cathedral Temple.

Since 1990, bishop of Novi Sad and Bačka is His Grace Irinej (Bulović).

Within the Diocese of Bačka are the following institutions - Publishing Institution of Beseda, Katihet Committee, Informational Services, Fund Visarion Pavlović, Charity Fund Platon Atanacković and other institutions.

Serbian people like to gather for community prayers on Saint's Feast Days (Slava). During the difficult and often painful moments in history, the celebration of the patron saint was often the only thread that connected the souls of our ancestors with God. We particularly love Saint's Feast Day when a church celebrates its heavenly patron (Church Slava).

Patron of the Diocese of Bačka is *Commemoration of the Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Colossae (Chonae)*.