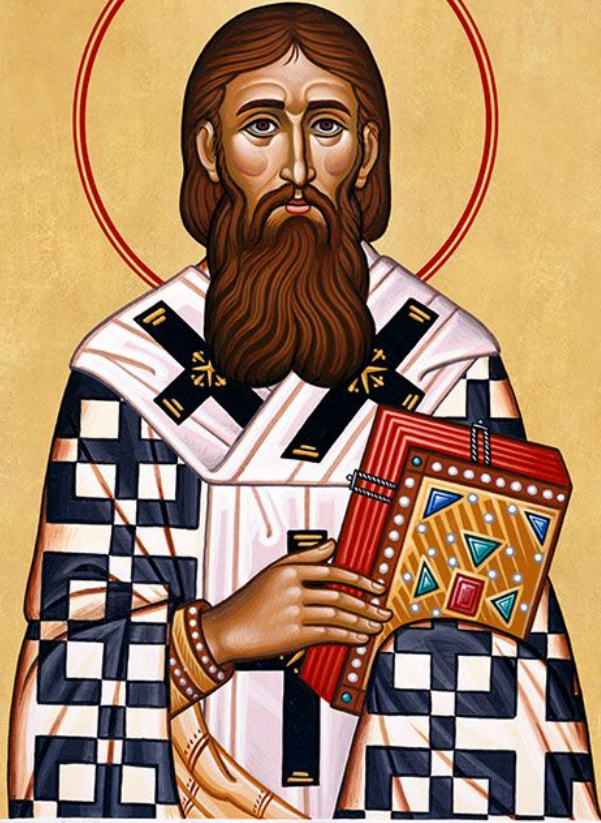


SAINT

SAVA  
OF SERBIA



# St. Sava of Serbia

St Petka Serbian Orthodox Church  
Children's Sunday School

## Introduction to St. Sava's Early Life

St. Sava, born Rastko Nemanjić in 1174 AD, is a revered figure in Serbian history and Orthodox Christianity. As the son of Stefan Nemanja, the Grand Prince of Serbia, St. Sava's early life was shaped by noble surroundings, exposing him to both secular and religious influences, he was a prince.

- At the time, Serbia was a Grand Principality of three regions known as Rascia, Hum, and Zeta.
- St. Sava at age 16 was made Prince of Hum and was a "mild and gentle ruler, kind to everyone, loving the poor as few others, and very respecting of the monastic life".



## Monastic Calling and Spiritual Journey

St. Sava decided to be a monk, and leave behind his prince title, which means he chose to live a special, quiet life dedicated to God. This decision happened when he was around 18 years old, and he traveled to Mount Athos to learn more about being close to God.

- Rastko was given the name Sava at the Russian St. Panteleimon Monastery on Mount Athos.
- After spending 7 years at the Greek Vatopedi Monastery, St. Sava convinced his father Stefan Nemanja to retire from the throne and join him in the monastic life worshipping God; changing his name to Simeon and eventually becoming a Saint as well.



## Monastic Foundation

St. Sava founded the Hilandar Monastery on Mount Athos, a significant spiritual and cultural center. This monastery became a focal point for the dissemination of Orthodox Christian teachings and Serbian culture.

- Hilandar was founded by St. Sava and his father St. Simeon in 1199 as a monastic community for Serbs
- It is located on Mount Athos “Holy Mountain”, Greece where many monasteries, relics, and monks reside together as a great and historical Orthodox community.



## Educational Reforms

St. Sava really liked learning, so when he was about 26 years old, he decided to make schools better. He started schools and places where people could learn more about God and other important things. St Sava founded the Serbian school at the Studenica Monastery.

- Studencia Monastery was founded by St. Sava’s father, Steven Nemanja (later St. Simeon) in 1190 who was ruler of Serbia and built many churches and monasteries.
- St. Sava returned from Hilandar to Studencia where he shared all the wisdom and spiritual treasure he had learned, teaching the Faith to his fellow Serbs.





## Literary Legacy

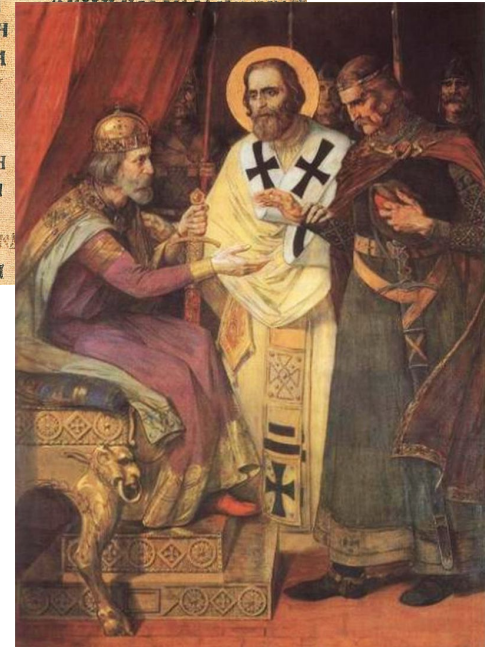
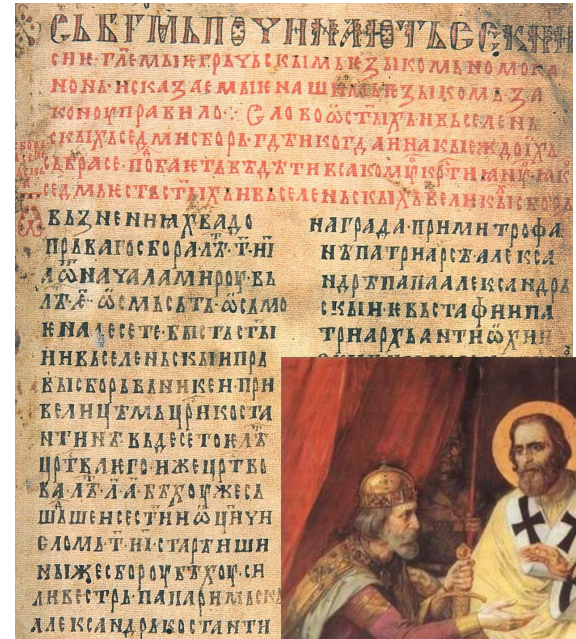
St. Sava was not only a spiritual leader but also a prolific writer. His literary contributions include theological treatises, hagiographies, and liturgical texts. These writings continue to shape Orthodox Christian theology and practice

- Zakonopravilo “Nomocanon” - Serbia’s First Constitution which laid out the religious and legal rules for the Serbian people to follow.
- Hilandar Typikon - the model for how all Serbian Monasteries should properly function and traditionally worship.

## Diplomatic Endeavors

When St. Sava was around 43 years old, he did some important work talking to other leaders. This was like being a special messenger to help keep the Serbian land safe and happy.

- His two older brothers Stefan and Vukan were fighting over who would be king of Serbia
- St. Sava stopped the fighting between his brothers and prevented a civil war in Serbia



## First Bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church

In a historic moment, St. Sava became the first Archbishop of the autocephalous Serbian Orthodox Church in the year 1219AD, he worked tirelessly to secure the autocephaly of the Serbian Orthodox Church from the Patriarchate of Constantinople. This appointment marked a significant milestone in the spiritual history of Serbia, emphasizing its ecclesiastical independence.

- Autocephaly means when a church is independent and run by its own Head Bishop titled “Patriarch”
- Ecclesiastical means when we refer to all of the Orthodox Christian Churches around the World (Constantinople, Jerusalem, Greece, Russia, etc.)
- Simply, St. Sava is the founder of our Serbian Orthodox Church among the community of Churches

## Legacy and Cultural Impact

St. Sava's legacy extends far beyond his lifetime. His influence on Serbian culture, spirituality, and education endures, with numerous churches, schools, and institutions named in his honor.

- St. Sava was not just a hero to the Serbian people with his contributions to our art, culture, law, and civilization.
- He is a Saint who followed Christ's Teachings and lived a God Pleasing life and someone we should all learn about as an example of how to live a good life.



## Canonization and Reverence

Recognized for his holiness and contributions, St. Sava was canonized as a saint within the Serbian Orthodox Church. His feast day is celebrated with great reverence, symbolizing the enduring impact of his life and work on Serbian history and spirituality.

- St. Sava's feast day is every year on January 24th
- His Slava is one of the most popular because of his legacy to the Serbian People and his contributions to the Orthodox Church.

## Conclusion

Every year people in Serbia and all over the world, like us here in Michigan, celebrate Saint Sava. They do happy things like singing, dancing, and learning. Saint Sava is a friend who still makes everyone smile, reminding them to be kind and good.

- Remember to honor and venerate St. Sava when you see his icons and pray to him.
- He loves us all very much and still works tirelessly for us.

