



## V. Rev. Mateja Matejic

February 19, 1924 - July 27, 2018

Protopresbyter-stavrophor Dr. Mateja Matejic fell asleep in the Lord on 27 July 2018. A WWII refugee seminarian at Bitolj, Yugoslavia, he completed his seminary education in a displaced persons camp in Eboli, Italy. In 1949, at another camp in W. Germany, he married Ljubica Nebrigic of Srem, his helpmate, brilliant partner, and gentle conscience, who preceded him in death on April 17, 2016.

The life of Father Matejic may best be summarized by his almost constant activity, a passion to work, to produce, to add something to the history, culture, memory, faith of others. In addition, with his words and deeds, he inspired others to believe, to build, to create.

He was ordained as a Serbian Orthodox priest in a camp in 1951. He and his young family immigrated in 1956. As a priest, he founded two parishes and encouraged and physically contributed to the building of two places of worship, the Church of St. George in Monroe, Michigan (served 1956-1967), and the Church of St. Stevan of Decani in Columbus, Ohio (served 1967-1990).

After his retirement in 1990, he voluntarily served as a temporary priest in Naples, Florida, Kansas City, Kansas, Akron, Norton, Barberton(Ohio), Hermitage, Midland, Youngwood (Pennsylvania), and Seattle, Washington,

where he is given credit for helping inspire them to have their first St. Sava parish church. He continued to regularly volunteer as long as he was able. He also taught and served as Dean of the Serbian Orthodox School of Theology at the St. Sava Monastery in Libertyville, Illinois.

Dr. Matejic published original works on theology, translations of early Christian texts, discovered and published unknown works of the medieval Serbian Church, wrote on the history of Orthodoxy. He was especially committed to children's education and wrote religious poems as well as plays and poems about Serbian saints, suitable for younger children.

In addition to his seminary education, he attained a BA in 1963 (Wayne State University) and a Ph.D. in 1967 (University of Michigan). He taught at Case Western Reserve 1967-1968, and then in the Slavic Department at Ohio State until his retirement as a full professor in 1989. His areas of specialization were diverse, but he was especially known for his lectures on Dostoevsky and Old Russian and medieval South Slavic literature and paleography.

Father Matejic was the co-founder and first editor (1967-1974) of *The Path of Orthodoxy / Staza Pravoslavlja*, which began as a dual-language newspaper of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of the Eastern U.S. and Canada, and is now an official publication of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America. In 1976, he established and for 20 years ran a small publishing company, "Kosovo," which published books of interest to the Serbian and Eastern Orthodox communities in North America.

As a professor at OSU, in 1969, he helped found and became the first director of the Hilandar Research Project, which microfilmed the medieval Slavic manuscripts of the Serbian monastery, Hilandar, on Mount Athos (Greece), thereby making their content more widely accessible and encouraging research in medieval Slavic studies. Under his direction, in time he helped

found and establish at OSU both a special collection, the Hilandar Research Library, and a small research center, the Resource Center for Medieval Slavic Studies with its “Hilandar” Endowment.

Dr. Matejic had a gift for languages and was fluent in five, conversant in another three, and read six others. He was prolific as a lecturer and author. Well known as a theologian and scholar, he travelled frequently and made presentations in 23 different countries. He was the author of 49 monographs and reference works, and over 500 articles and literary reviews, many of them for *World Literature Today* (1976-1981). His scholarly publications, especially descriptions of Slavic medieval manuscripts, are consulted and cited regularly.

His creativity also extended to poetry and literature. In fact, his first works were published at age 18 in 1942. Many of his published works are books of poems, short stories, and memoirs, in Serbian and/or English. Several poems were published in the camps. His poems, especially those inspired by Hilandar Monastery and its monks, have been published with and without attribution in several countries, especially Serbia. Some of his poems have been set to original music and performed in concerts.

Father Matejic received recognition and numerous awards, beginning with prestigious academic fellowships, including the Woodrow Wilson. Later, his research and scholarship were instrumental and led to receiving grants from the U.S. Information Agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities, American Council for Learned Societies, and several research awards of The Ohio State University.

For his dedication to the Serbian Orthodox Church, he was recognized as a “cross-bearer,” with the right to wear a pectoral cross, similar to those worn by bishops. In 2001 he received both a Commendation and the highest award of

the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Order of St. Sava.

For his original poetry and literature in Serbian, the Union of Serbian Writers acknowledged him to be among the three best Serbian emigre authors of all-time. In 1988, he was accepted into the Union of Serbian Writers, and in 1996, 2000, and 2005, he received 3 separate literary awards. The city of Smederevo, which he left as a political refugee in 1944, acknowledged his many contributions by a lengthy entry in the “Smederevo Encyclopedia.” In 2001, he was awarded the key to the city of Smederevo.

For his contributions to scholarship and medieval studies, he was also recognized by Bulgaria. In 1978, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church awarded him the Order of St. Kliment. In 1984, he was inducted as a member of the Union of Bulgarian Writers. In 1988, he received the highest recognition of the University of Sofia, the “Blue Ribbon with Medal of St. Kliment.”

The Very Rev. Dr. Mateja Matejic was a classic example of a Renaissance man, “a person with many talents or areas of knowledge.” His breadth and depth of interests, knowledge, and creativity was remarkable. Yet, without the steadfast support, patience, understanding, and sacrifice of his wife, Protopresbytera Ljubica, many of his travels, lectures, opportunities and accomplishments would not have been possible.

The Very Rev. Dr. Mateja Matejic is survived by: five children—Predrag (Tatyana), Milica (Frederick), Vida (Thomas), Nenad, Dragana (Milan); 12 grandchildren—Nenad (Tina), Svetoslav (Sarah), Angela (Matt), Anjalyn (Patrick), Zachary, Emily (Doug), Konstantin, Kara, Alex (Lauren), Thomas, Milan, Aleksii; and nine great grandchildren—Ethan, Sam, Eli, Sophia, Dimitur, Stella, Elisaveta, Violet, Finn. He is also survived by his dear sister-in-law and friend Gordana Miric, nephew Borislav Miric, and many nieces and nephews in Serbia.

In lieu of flowers and in accordance with his wishes, donations may be made to support children and orphans in Serbia ([lifeline—canada.org](http://lifeline-canada.org) or <http://www.lifeline.org>), Hilandar Monastery ([athosfriends.org](http://athosfriends.org)), or The Ohio State University's Resource Center for Medieval Slavic Studies ([rcmss.osu.edu](http://rcmss.osu.edu) and "Giving").

Tuesday July 31

2:30-4:30: Viewing Rutherford-Corbin Funeral Home / 515 N. High St.  
Worthington Ohio

6:00: Memorial Service | St. Stevan of Dechani Serbian Orthodox Church /  
1840 N. Cassady Rd. Columbus

Wednesday August 1

10:00: Divine Liturgy—Funeral Service | St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Cathedral  
/ 6306 Broadview Rd. Cleveland Ohio

Interment: Serbian Orthodox Monastery Marcha Cemetery / 5095 Broadview  
Rd. Richfield Ohio

Dacha: St. Sava Cathedral Hall

# Cemetery Details

## Marcha Monastery

5095 Broadview Road  
Richfield, OH

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUL 31. 2:30 PM - 4:30 PM (ET)

Rutherford-Corbin Funeral Home  
515 High Street  
Worthington, OH 43085  
(614) 885-4006  
info@rutherfordfuneralhome.com  
<https://www.rutherfordfuneralhomes.com/>

## Memorial Service

JUL 31. 6:00 PM (ET)

St. Stevan of Dechani Serbian Orthodox Church  
1840 North Cassidy Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43219

## Funeral and Divine Liturgy

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AUG 1. 10:00 AM (ET)

St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Cathedral  
6306 Broadview Road  
Cleveland, OH 44134

# Tribute Wall



“ *V. Rev. Mateja Matejic*

January 28, 2023 at 10:24 AM



“ *We were just speaking of Father and Googled him to find he was gone. From Monroe Michigan we have very wonderful memories of him, Condolenses to you all.*  
*Nancy Macut*

**Nancy Macut** - October 17, 2018 at 05:56 PM



“ *Deepest Sympathy is extended to the family of our late and dear V. Rev. Mateja Matejic. The Serbian people and Orthodoxy will deeply miss this special person - a learned and highly respected clergyman of our church who kept the Orthodox Faith intact as handed down to us over the centuries. I greatly enjoyed our periodic conversations that spanned many years. He was both a spiritual and intellectual mentor to many of our generation.*

*We were honored to have known him and we are better people because he touched our lives.....*

*He will be forever in our hearts, thoughts and prayers.....*

*Vecnaja Pamjat - Memory Eternal!*

*George Kosich*  
*Professor of Music/Musician*

**George Kosich** - August 01, 2018 at 07:50 PM

ML

“ Dear Father Matejic's Family,

*Please accept our condolences during this sad time for your family. We enjoyed knowing Father Matejic and will always remember his kindness, thoughtfulness and humor. May his memory be eternal.*

*Bojanic Family*

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**Mira Bojanic Larick** - August 01, 2018 at 04:08 PM

ML

“ Dear Father Matejic's Family,

*Please accept our deepest sympathy for the loss of Your Father, Grandfather and Great-Grandfather.*

*During his life, we were given a precious chance to meet him, to enjoy his kindness, and to learn from his vast knowledge and experience. We will always regard that as a greatest gift, honor and privilege.*

*May the love of God be with him forever.*

*Slobodan and Brana Lukovic, with family*

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**Mr&Mrs Lukovic** - July 31, 2018 at 10:34 AM

FI

“ From Hilton Garden Inn & Hampton Inn purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of V. Rev. Mateja Matejic.



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**From Hilton Garden Inn & Hampton Inn** - July 31, 2018 at 09:06 AM

DO

“ You are in our thoughts and prayers. We have many memories of the times we shared in Monroe. Millie and Donna.

Donna ODell - July 30, 2018 at 06:00 PM

CO

“ As the wife of the late Professor Hongor Oulanoff, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Mateja Matejic's outstanding contributions to the Slavic Department at The Ohio State University. His knowledge of Russian and Slavic Literatures and Culture educated students for many years.

He is and will be remembered.

Constance-Alexa Oulanoff

Constance-Alexa oulanoff - July 30, 2018 at 04:53 PM



“ A Full Life was purchased for the family of V. Rev. Mateja Matejic.



July 30, 2018 at 04:42 PM

MH

“ Condolences to the family of Father Matejic. I remember well all the work he did at the OSU Libraries Hilandar Room, even after his retirement. His was a very full and active life. My sympathy to Pred, Konstantin and extended family.

Marsha Hamilton - July 30, 2018 at 03:18 PM

PC

“ *Father welcome me and my daughters into St Stevan's many years ago. his kindness and grace will always be remembered.  
Penny Catanzaro and family*

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**penny catanzaro** - July 30, 2018 at 02:13 PM



“ *Sentiments of Serenity Spray was purchased for the family of V. Rev. Mateja Matejic.*



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July 29, 2018 at 09:54 PM

GK

“ *As a colleague of Father Matejic, I celebrate his life and the many ways he has changed the world for the better. His contributions to South Slavic Studies will outlast all of us, notably through his memorialization of the documents from the Hilandar Monastery and making them available for scholars time immemorial. If it wasn't for him, this scholarly treasure trove of worldly dimensions would never have existed. He was a frequent lecturer on Orthodoxy in my Russian Culture course, presenting a dimension of Christianity in a way that no other professor could. Through his diverse contributions he will always be alive to all of us. Eternal memory!*

*George Kalbouss*

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**George Kalbouss** - July 29, 2018 at 12:30 PM