



Archbishop Mark of Berlin and Germany Will Prayerfully Celebrate the 35th Anniversary of his Episcopal Consecration at Buchendorf's Convent

Archbishop Mark was born Michael Arndt on January 29, 1941, in Saxony, where the first Russian bishop of German extraction, Metropolitan Seraphim (Lade) of blessed memory, was born.

Having finished his final 13-year exams in Frankfurt am Main in 1960, the future Vladyka Mark joined the military services of West Germany, where he spent a year and a half. He then reenlisted several times and reached the rank of senior lieutenant.

In 1962, he enrolled in the Frankfurt University's history/philology department, transferring later to Heidelberg University. There he specialized in Slavic and English, studying, in addition to Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovak, Czech and Macedonian language and literature. He wrote his doctoral thesis on the topic "Biographical Literature of the Tver Kingdom of the XIV and XV Centuries."

Studying the Russian language led the young student to the Russian emigre community in Frankfurt. As a student of Prof. Dimitri Chizhevsky in Heidelberg, he would visit the ROCOR church in Mannheim dedicated to St Alexander Nevsky, where he converted to Holy Orthodoxy in 1964, soon being ordained a reader. Trips to Mt Athos, friendship with the Athos elders at Karoulia (Schemahieromonk Seraphim and Schemahieromonk Nikolaos, Schemamonk Nikodim), visits to St Elias Skete and St Panteleimon Monastery, where he came to know Schemahieromonk Abel (now Archimandrite of St John the Theologian Monastery in Ryazan') determined the spiritual path of this Doctor of Slavic Studies. His future scholarly work was then devoted to the glorified St Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow.

In the fall of 1973, the future hierarch began studying theology in Belgrade University, which he graduated with a theology degree in 1979. His personal friendship with then-disfavored Archimandrite Justin (Popovic) in Celijski Monastery led him to the inner circle of the students of this Serbian Abbot, who were then hieromonks and now hierarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church—Metropolitan Amphilohije, Bishop Atanasije, Bishop Artemije, Metropolitan Irinej.

Ordained to the diaconate in 1975, the future Vladyka Mark soon ceased teaching Church Slavonic and ancient Russian language and literature in Erlangen, and halted his scholarly work, in favor of being tonsured to the monkhood, which occurred in the summer of 1975 at Lesna Convent in France. Three days later, Fr Mark was ordained a hieromonk and assigned as Deputy Rector of the Russian church in Wiesbaden. In the summer of 1976, by decision of the Synod of Bishops, he was elevated to the rank of archimandrite. Archbishop Paul (Pavlov, +1995), who was then Bishop of Stuttgart and Southern Germany, tonsured and ordained him. Archimandrite Mark ministered to three parishes—Wiesbaden, Darmstadt and Saarbrücken. He devoted himself to preserving the tsarist churches of Germany and the renovation and expansion of the Russian cemetery near the Wiesbaden church, where he conducted the full cycle of monastic divine services, and began to gather and teach the local youth, while continuing to study theology and passing examinations in Belgrade.



Following the death of Archbishop Theodosius of Australia and New Zealand, the Synod of Bishops appointed Bishop Paul, Vicar of the German Diocese, to replace him. Archimandrite Mark was then elevated to the episcopacy and appointed Bishop of Munich and Southern Germany. The hierarchal consecration was performed on November 30, 1980 at the Synodal Cathedral of Our Lady of the Sign in New York. In accordance with ecclesiastical law, during the nomination, Archimandrite Mark read a sermon through which he threaded his concern for how he was to lead his flock. Warm words were spoken about his spiritual proximity to the great Serbian ascetic and theologian Archimandrite Justin (Popovic, +1979) and affinity for the Holy Mt Athos. His Eminence Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky, +1985) officiated at the consecration, along with Archbishop Vitaly (Oustinov, +2006) of Montreal and Canada; Archbishop Anthony (Medvedev, +2000) of San Francisco and Western America; Bishop Laurus (Shkurla, +2008) of Syracuse and Holy Trinity Monastery; Bishop Paul and Bishop Gregore (Grabbe, +1995) of Manhattan.

After the consecration, Vladyka Mark moved with a small group of monks to the Monastery of St Job of Pochaev in Munich. The monastery underwent reconstruction and renovation. Since 1981, it has published the *Vestnik Germanskoj Eparkhii* [Messenger of the German Diocese], a publishing house was set up for Russian- and German-language materials, as well as a candle and incense factory. The monastery follows the Mt Athos rule. In the fall of 1982, Bishop Mark, due to the serious illness of Archbishop Thilophius (Narko), became Bishop of Berlin and Germany, continuing to live at St Job Monastery, whence he rules the Diocese.

In the mid-1980's, Vladyka Mark was appointed Administrator of the Diocese of Great Britain as well as St Alexander Nevsky Parish in Copenhagen.

In 1991, the Synod of Bishops elevated Vladyka Mark to the rank of Archbishop.

In 1997, he was appointed Overseer of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem.

Between 1993-1997, Vladyka Mark headed the dialog between the two Russian Orthodox dioceses (of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Church Abroad) in the newly-reunited Germany. Since 2000, Archbishop Mark has been Chairman of the Commission on the Unity of the Russian Church, and since 2003, the Chairman of the Commission of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia on discussions with the Moscow Patriarchate.