



VIDOVDAN SPEECH

St. Nikolai of Zica (Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic) is a modern Serbian saint who came to America four times, and spent the last eleven years of his life here. He was canonized by the Serbian Orthodox Church in 1987 and is remembered by American Orthodox Christians as a protector, mover, teacher and inspirer of the Serbian Orthodox Church in America. He spent many years as an instructor at the St. Sava Seminary in Libertyville, Illinois, in the 1940s and early 1950s. He also served as dean and rector at St. Tikhon Seminary in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. His book, the Prologue of Ochrid, is published in four volumes.

This speech was presented by Bishop Nikolai 99 years ago on Vidovdan. His Grace spoke at St. Paul's Cathedral in London at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The address was given exactly two years to the day after Gavriilo Princip assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria in Sarajevo, triggering the first world war. The Londoners present who heard his profound words included HRH King George V.

Legacy of Saint Bishop Nikolaj Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic to Europe – Vidovdan 1916

Gentlemen and Friends,

I came from Serbia, European mid-night. There is no glimmer of light there. All the light escaped from Earth to Heaven and only from Heaven does the light come. Nevertheless, we are weak in everything, but we are strong in hope and faith in the recent dawn of the day. I am grateful to Lord Archbishop Konken Beriski, who enabled me to address you on Vidovdan this summer of our Lord 1916 in this wonderful St. Paul Church in front of His Highness King George V and the most distinguished Englishmen.

Gentlemen and friends! Yesterday, I spent the day looking around this magnificent temple which is the pride of England and Christianity. I saw the temple was built from the most expensive material which has been brought from different parts of the Empire on which the sun never sets. I saw that the temple was built from granite and marble which had been washed over by waves of hundreds of seas and oceans. It was adorned with expensive gold and precious stones that came from mines in Europe and Asia. I am convinced that this temple is one of the architectural

miracles of the world.

No, gentlemen and friends! I am coming from one small country in the Balkans in which there is one temple bigger, more beautiful, more valuable and holier than this temple. This temple is located in the Serbian town of Nis and the name of the temple is Skull Tower (Ђеле Кула). This temple was built from the skulls and bones of my countrymen. This nation has stood for five centuries as a robust dam of the Asian sea on the South gate of Europe. If all the skulls and bones were to be immured in the wall, we could build a temple 300 meters high, wide and long, and each Serb could raise a hand today to show that this is the head of my grandfather, my father, my brother, my neighbor, my friend and my Kum. For five centuries Serbia - by its own skulls and bones – shields Europe so that it can live happily. We enfeebled Turkish swords with our skulls and wore down wild hordes who strove against Europe like a mountain whirlwind. Not for one decade or for one century, but for all centuries between Raphael and Shirer - for those white and red centuries in which Europe reformed its faith, science, politics, work and life in general. Through

words. When Europe audaciously corrected Gods and people from the past; and when it was passing through one purgatory, physically and spiritually, we were like patient slaves who fought against Europe's enemies to defend the entrance to that purgatory. Secondly, while Europe was becoming Europe, we were its live and impenetrable fence, wild thorns around a gentle rouse. On Vidovdan 1389, Serbian Duke Lazar with his courageous army stood on Kosovo Field, on the stronghold of a Christian Europe, and he gave his life for a Christian culture. In those times, there were as many Serbs as there are Englishmen now. Today, there are ten times less Serbs than in those times.

Where are they? They died defending Europe.

It is now time for Europe to repay its debt to Serbia.

*Translation into English
by Milos Rastovic, April 2015*

*Original speech provided
by Vladimir Kulmatici*

**Read about "Skull Tower"
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