



## **Bishop Antonije of Moravica is highly decorated by the Russian Orthodox Church and Russian government**

On 23 July 2020, Bishop Antonije of Moravica, representative of the Patriarch of Serbia to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia and dean of the Representation of the Serbian Patriarchate in Moscow celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia sent a congratulatory message to him with wishes of the abundance of spiritual gifts, good health and God' inexhaustible aid for many years of peaceful and blessed archpastoral ministry.

His Holiness honored Bishop Antonije with the Order of St. Alexius, Metropolitan of Moscow, 3<sup>rd</sup> class, and will present it later.

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed an ordinance awarding Bishop Antonije of Moravica with the Order of Friendship 'for his great contribution to the development of spiritual and cultural ties and educational activity.'

On July 23, Archpriest Nikolai Balashov, deputy chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR), congratulated Bishop Antonije with his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday and the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his episcopal ministry on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, DECR chairman.

In his congratulatory speech delivered at the Church of Ss Peter and Paul, the Moscow Representation of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archpriest Nikolai gave a high appraisal of the work of Bishop Antonije as the head of the Representation and noted an outstanding personal contribution of Bishop Antonije to the deepening of mutual understanding and strengthening of cooperation between the Russian and Serbian Churches.

Metropolitan Hilarion visited the Representation on July 12, its dedication day. While congratulating Bishop Antonije with his upcoming anniversary, he underscored that the larger part of His Grace's life has been linked with the Russian Orthodox Church.

'You have become a good and dear friend of our faithful. Within the walls of the Monastery of St. Sergius you have loved the Russian liturgical tradition, the Russian language and culture. The knowledge you have acquired at the Moscow Theological Academy helped you in reviving traditions of the Serbian-Russian friendship established before the Revolution. Your fatherly care for the Serbian diaspora in the countries of the canonical territory of the Moscow Patriarchate and your tireless efforts taken for the development of relations between our Churches have wrote a new page to the common history of our nations of the same faith,' said Metropolitan Hilarion and honored Bishop Antonije with the DECR award – the medal of St. Mark of Ephesus, 1<sup>st</sup> class.

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