



## Hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church attend celebrations in memory of St. Basil of Ostrog in Montenegro



With the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, the head of the Central Asia Metropolis, Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Uzbekistan, arrived on May 10, 2017, in the Serbian Orthodox Church's diocese of Budimlja and Niksic. The honoured guest was welcomed at the church of St. Basil of Ostrog in Niksic by Bishop Ioanikije of Budimlja and Niksic with the clergy of the cathedral.

The archpastor came to Montenegro for the celebrations commemorating St. Basil of Ostrog, one of the most venerated saints of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Metropolitan Vikenty thanked the welcoming party for the warm welcome, conveyed a blessing from Patriarch Kirill and congratulated the people on the Feast of the Bright Resurrection of Christ, which

unites all the fraternal Orthodox nations.

On May 11, Metropolitan Vikenty celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the convent of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke at the picturesque place called Zupa 12 km from Niksic. He was assisted by the Niksic clergy.

On the same day, a photo-exhibition was opened in a solemn ceremony in Niksic, called 'The 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Laura of St. Alexander Nevsky'. Presented were works by Misha Brankovic. Along with His Eminence Vikenty, the opening was attended by Bishop Nazary of Kronstadt, abbot of the St. Alexander Nevsky's Laura of the Holy Trinity and Bishop Ioanikije.

In his speech of greeting, Bishop Ioanikije stressed that 'thanks to the love of His Eminence Nazary, there is an opportunity to see through art the St. Petersburg's churches and shrines. There are many well-known buildings of cultural heritage, but above all the Laura'. He said that the photo-exhibition would also remind people of the history of the Serbian people because it is in the St. Alexander Nevsky Laura, that the Serbian Martyr-Patriarch Basil (Jovanovic-Brkic) lies in rest. Buried next to him is buried Metropolitan Basil (Petrovic) of Primorje and Montenegro.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Bishop Nazary noted that for Russia the year 2017 is marked with an historic date – the centenary of the October Revolution. This event shook not only the Russian Empire but also the whole world.

As a sign of gratitude for love with which Bishop Nazary visits the diocese on the commemoration of St. Basil of Ostrog, and a sign of further consolidation of ties between the two fraternal Orthodox nations, Bishop Ioanikije presented the abbot of the St. Alexander Nevsky Laura with a copy of the Athonite shrine – the Hilander Icon of the Mother of God 'the Three Hands' for the church of the Annunciation, which, regrettably, is still a museum, with the hope that the church will soon be returned to the monastery.

In the evening on the eve of the St. Basil of Ostrog commemoration day, Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent celebrated All-Night Vigil at the Cathedral dedicated to the saint in Niksic.

In recognition of his contribution to the development of fraternal relations between the two Slavic Orthodox nations, Bishop Ioanikije presented Metropolitan Vikenty with the diocesan highest award – the Medal of the Holy Protomartyr George the Conqueror (First Degree). He also presented the guest from the Russian Orthodox Church with pectoral cross and icon.

The head of the Metropolia of Central Asia cordially thanked Bishop Ioanikije for the high award and

warm hospitality.

On May 12, the commemoration day of St. Basil of Ostrog, His Eminence Vikenty presided over the Divine Liturgy at the central cathedral church of the Ostrog Monastery in Montenegro, in which the honorable relics of the saint are kept.

Thousands of the faithful came to Ostrog to participate in the devotional celebration of the memory of the Wonderworker of Ostrog and to venerate his holy relics.

In the archpastoral homily, Bishop Ioanikije noted that the St. Basil day is celebrated in the light of the Resurrection of Christ, and 'we take it as a continuation and broadening of the Paschal celebrations'.

Conveying greetings and congratulations from the bishops, clergy and all the faithful of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Vikenty said that His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia loves very much Montenegro and the fraternal Serbian Orthodox Church.

In the afternoon, a procession with the cross took place in Ostrog and the traditional all people's prayer was said for the glory and honour of St. Basil of Ostrog, the heavenly patron of the city. Tens of thousands of the faithful took part in the devotional march.

*DECR Communication Service*

*From the site of the ROC Metropolitan of Central Asia*