



## His Holiness Patriarch Kirill visits Serbian Orthodox Church on November 14-16



On 14-16 November 2014, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia paid an irenical visit to the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church was accompanied by an official delegation which included Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations; Bishop Sergiy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administrative Secretariat; Mr. Vladimir Legoida, chairman of the Synodal Information Department; archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR vice-chairman; archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations; protodeacon Vladimir Nazarkin, assistant to the DECR chairman; archpriest Andrei Milkin, head of the Patriarchal Protocol Service; and deacon Alexander Volkov, head of the Patriarchal Press Office.

In the morning of November 14, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill arrived in Belgrade. At the airport he gave a

brief interview to representatives of the mass media.

Timed to the visit of the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church was a round table devoted to the theme “Emperor Nicholas II and Serbia. Timed to the centenary of the First World War,” which took place at the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade on November 14.

Upon his arrival, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill visited the Cathedral of the Holy Archangel Michael. There the Primates of the Russian and the Serbian Orthodox Churches celebrated a prayer service.

Later His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia visited the University of Belgrade where the ceremony of awarding His Holiness Patriarch Kirill the degree of Doctor *honoris causa* took place.

*That same day, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and His Holiness Patriarch Irinej met with H.E. Tomislav Nikolić, President of the Republic of Serbia.*

Later the Primates of the Russian and the Serbian Orthodox Churches met with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Aleksandar Vučić.

On November 15, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia visited the Monastery of Rakovica, the place of the repose of Serbian Patriarchs Dimitrije (1846-1930) and Pavle (1914-2009), and celebrated the Litia at their tombs. The talks between the Primates of the Russian and the Serbian Orthodox Churches followed the service.

On the same day, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill conducted the blessing of the Russian Necropolis in Belgrade, the largest burial place where Russian soldiers of the First World War repose, and visited the exhibition “Russia and Serbia: History of Spiritual Ties.”

In the evening of November 15, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill celebrated Matins at the Church of the Holy Trinity, the metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church in Belgrade.

Within the framework of the visit, on November 15, Metropolitan Hilarion led the ceremony of the unveiling of a commemorative plaque in honour of Metropolitan Antony (Khrapovitsky) in Sremski Karlovci.

On November 16, the Primates of the Russian and the Serbian Orthodox Churches celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral of St. Sabbas in Belgrade. After the service, His Holiness Patriarch Irinej presented His Holiness Patriarch Kirill with the highest award of the Serbian Orthodox Church – the

Order of St. Sabbas, 1<sup>st</sup> class.

That day later, Patriarch Kirill and Patriarch Irinej conducted the blessing of a monument to the Russian Emperor Nicholas II in the centre of the Serbian capital.

In the evening, a reception on behalf of His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia was given in honour of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia.

After the reception, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill departed for the airport. He was seen off by His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia; H.E. Alexander Chepurin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Serbia; H.E. Vladimir Chushev, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Belarus to the Republic of Serbia; and hierarchs and clergymen of the Serbian Church.

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