Primate of the Church of Serbia attends Christmas reception at Russian embassy

His Holiness Irenaeus, Patriarch of Serbia, visited on January 10 the Christmas reception given by the Russian embassy in Belgrade. Among the guests were also Bishop Irenaeus of Bac together with other representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Mr. D. Karic, member of Serbia's National Assembly, Ms. Mileta Radojevic, director of the Office for Cooperation with Churches and Religious Organizations, Lieutenant Colonel M. Dragovic, commander of the anti-terrorist unit of the Serbian Interior Ministry, Archpriest Vitaly Tarasjev, rector of the Belgrade representation of the Russian Orthodox Church, Hieromonk Ignaty of the Sretensky Monastery in Moscow and members of Orthodox public organizations in Serbia.

The event was opened by Russian Ambassador A. Chepurin. He noted that the last year was full of contacts between the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches. "Today we recall two epoch-making events of the last year – the visit of His Holiness Patriarch Irenaeus to Russia, Ukraine and Belarus on the occasion of the 1025th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus' and the visit of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill to Serbia and Montenegro for the 1700th anniversary of the Edict of Milan celebrated by representatives of all the Local Orthodox Churches", he said.

The Russian ambassador also pointed to the great role that the two sister Churches play in the civilizational development of Russia and Serbia "by their efforts to preserve our Orthodox identity, culture and our sometimes tragic but great history".

Mr. Chepurin stressed that along with development and progress "we should preserve our roots. If we lose our spiritual roots, we, Serbians and Russians, will lose incentives for progress and development". He said that it is in fashion today to review moral and ethical norms, to obliterate national traditions and cultures. It is required of societies today not only to recognize the right of each to freedom of conscience,

political views and private life but also to recognize the equality of notions opposite in meaning. “It distorts the very idea of democracy. Most people in Russia and Serbia do not accept this revision detrimental as it is to Christian and therefore European values and culture”.

He said that Russia is experiencing “a second Orthodox revival”. Thus, one or two churches are erected each month in Moscow. Within ten years, 200 more churches in new districts will be added to the 500 ones existing in Moscow. In Sochi, the capital city of the 2014 Olympic Games, a compound for the medical treatment of elderly clergy is being built with private donations at the entrance of the gigantic Olympic park and a church of Christ the Saviour Not-Made-with-Hands has already been built. This church, resembling the Church of St. Savvas in Belgrade, was consecrated in the beginning of January.

During the grand reception, the film “The Second Baptism of Rus” by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk was shown.

DECR Communication Service

Site of the Russian Embassy in Belgrade

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