



## His Holiness Patriarch Kirill visits the Serbian Orthodox Church



On 4 October 2013, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia arrived in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia. The visit to the Serbian Orthodox Church is timed for the celebration of the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Edict of Milan.

Seeing off His Holiness at Vnukovo-3 airport was H.E. Slavenko Terzić, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Serbia to the Russian Federation.

The official delegation, which accompanies His Holiness, includes Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations (DECR); Bishop Sergy of Solnechnogorsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Administrative Secretariat; archpriest Nikolai Balashov, DECR deputy chairman; archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, DECR secretary for inter-Orthodox relations; archpriest Andrei Milkin, head of the Patriarch's protocol; and deacon Alexander Volkov, head of press office of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

The Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church and his suite were met at the Nikola Tesla airport by His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia; bishops and clerics of the Serbian Orthodox Church; archpriest Vitaly Tarasjev, rector

of the metochion of the Russian Church in Belgrade; Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Ivan Mrkić; Transport Minister Aleksandar Antić; and Alexander Chepurin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to the Republic of Serbia.

The Primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church warmly greeted His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and thanked him for coming to Belgrade, saying that this visit will bring a tremendous good to the Church of Christ and will help us to become even closer to each other and to all Orthodox hierarchs and nations.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill thanked Patriarch Irinej for invitation, spoke at length about the Edict of Milan as a historical event and mentioned the celebration of the 1025<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Baptism of Rus'.

After the talk between the Primates, His Holiness and his suite departed for the Rakovica Monastery, where he conducted the requiem litiya at the tombs of Serbian Patriarchs Demetrios and Pavle.

That same day, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill visited the metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church in Belgrade and celebrated a prayer service at the Church of the Holy Trinity. The rector, archpriest Vitaly Tarasjev presented His Holiness with a Vladimir icon of the Mother of God, and all the worshippers were given small icons of the Saviour to commemorate the visit of His Holiness.

On October 5, a doxology was celebrated at the Cathedral of Archangel Michael in Belgrade. Attending the service were heads and representatives of the Local Orthodox Church, including heads of official delegation, representatives of the Roman Catholic Church from the Vatican, Milan, and the Catholic metropolia of Belgrade, and representatives of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

After the service Patriarch Irinej welcomed the guests and noted that the celebration of the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Edict of Milan, gives the Christian world an opportunity 'to find a way to a new kind of cooperation and, God willing, to solution of many problems that still exist.

In his address to the worshippers His Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew underscored the significance of the Edict of Milan which marked the beginning of the epoch of Christian Europe.

That same day, a reception was given at the premises of the Patriarchate of Serbia in honour of the heads and representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches.

After the reception, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill talked with the mass media. He spoke at length about the historical significance of the Edict of Milan and added that all who have come here to celebrate have come as one Orthodox family.

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