His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia completes his visit to St. Petersburg



On 22 July 2013, the last day of his stay in the northern capital of Russia, the Primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church members of his delegation visited St. Nicholas Naval Cathedral and venerated the icon of St. Nicholas. Archpriest Bogdan Soiko, rector of the cathedral, told the guests that the cathedral marked its 250th anniversary last year and that it was never closed, even in the hard years of atheistic persecution in the 20th century.

His Holiness Irinej said that they had come to Holy Russia not as tourists, but as people who cherish great shrines of the Russian Orthodox Church. It is difficult to find words to express our feelings, he said and continued: 'We thank the Lord for vouchsafing us to visit holy sites... which help us stand firm in our faith, being the glory of Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church and also of Orthodoxy throughout the world."

His Holiness asked for prayers for the Serbian people and for those living in Kosovo and Metohija in particular as they experience great trials and suffer a lot. He thanked the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian state authorities for support rendered to them.

Later, the delegation of the Serbian Orthodox Church visited the Church of Ss Peter and Paul in Petropavlovskaya Fortress and the stavropegic St. John convent, where prayers were offered up at the

tomb of St. John of Kronstadt.

That same day the Primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church and his delegation departed for Moscow. Seeing them off at Pulkovo-3 airport were Metropolitan Vladimir of St. Petersburg and Ladoga, clergymen of the St. Petersburg diocese, and head of the protocol department, Mr. Ivan Sudosa.

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