



Patriarch Irinej bestows upon Prime Minister Putin the highest award of Serbian Orthodox Church

During his working visit to Serbia, Prime Minister Putin visited the church of St. Sava in Belgrade on 23 March 2011. His arrival at this largest church in Serbia was announced by the ringing of bells.

His Holiness Patriarch Irinej of Serbia conferred on Mr. Putin the Order of St. Sava with the diploma explaining the status of this highest award of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Then Mr. Putin and His Holiness the Patriarch proceeded into the church, where numerous faithful awaited them in spite of the late hour. The Russian prime minister was welcomed by the congregation's cries 'Long live Russia!' and 'Long live Putin!'

The prime minister and the patriarch discussed the progress of construction and decoration work, in particular the making of mosaics for St. Sava's. Russian Orthodox societies pledged their help.

'We work with the help of God and hope for the help of Russian brothers', the Primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church said. Mr. Putin, in his turn, said he liked the church very much, adding, 'It is magnificent and worthy of Serbia'.

The head of the Russian Government venerated the main shrine of the church, the icon of St. Sava of Serbia, and put a candle for the health and repose of the victims of 1999 bombing, the press service of the prime minister reports.

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