Archbishop Hilarion visits the Patriarchate of Pec

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Archbishop Hilarion of Volokolamsk, chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations, on a visit to Kosovo and Methochia at the invitation of Bishop Artemije of Rasko-Prizren and Kosovo-Metochia, visited the convent compound 'The Patriarchate of Pec' 30 October 2009.

The convent was built in the 13th century by Archbishop Arseny, a successor of St. Savva of Serbia and for several centuries was first the residence of Archbishop of Pec and later of Patriarch of Pec, head of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Its church of Christ the Saviour has remained the place of enthronement of the Patriarchs of Serbia since the time of Ioannikyj who became patriarch in 1346.

Archbishop Hilarion was welcomed by the mother superior of the convent and the sisters. He visited the convent's churches and venerated the miracle-working Icon of Our Lady of Pec, which had been brought by St. Savva of Serbia from the Holy Land.

After sharing a meal with the monastic community, Bishop Artemije thanked Archbishop Hilarion for coming and for fraternal support he gave to the Orthodox Serbs in Kosovo, saying, 'During these days you have seen many holy places, both surviving and ruined. You have seen how hard life here is in Kosovo and Methochia for Orthodox Christians. But you have brought with you great joy and consolation. We are deeply grateful to the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian people for the fraternal love and support in this difficult time'.

Archbishop Hilarion responded by thanking His Grace for hospitality and the opportunity 'to visit great Orthodox shrines of Kosovo and Metochia, to talk with monks and nuns and the devout laity who are performing every day the feat of confession of their faith in the land of Kosovo'.

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