THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Department for External Church Relations

The Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral Joanikije heads the Divine Liturgy at Sretensky Monastery in Moscow.



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On 16th October the metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral Joanikije, who had come to Moscow at the invitation of His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill, celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the Church of Christ's Resurrection and the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia at the stavropegic Sretensky Monastery.

Concelebrating with the metropolitan of the Serbian Orthodox Church were the vicar abbot of the monastery Father John (Ludischev), the secretary of the metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral archpriest Ostoja (Knežević) and the brethren of the monastery.

Father John thanked his guest for the gift of prayerful communion at the Divine Liturgy and presented him with an icon of the monastery's heavenly protector the holy martyr Saint Hilarion.

"As metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral I am here today to continue a tradition which are forefathers began a very long time ago," said metropolitan Joanikije in his homily, mentioning that on the eve the memory of Saint Paisius the Patriarch of Peć had been celebrated. Saint Paisius had exhorted the people of Serbia and the Serbian Orthodox Church to "preserve the close and good relationship with fraternal Russia." The metropolitan noted that in his homeland they recall well that in the period of the Turkish yoke, Montenegro survived thanks to her connection with Russia and Russia's protection.

"When we are gathered together around Christ, then we are truly strong as with faith and hope we look towards Christ and our future," said metropolitan Joanikije. He emphasized that "we should not allow the temptations of the sea of the world to bestorm us so that they sow division among us," but also that amidst the temptations of this world Orthodox Christians ought to steadfastly "preserve unity and the sacred faith by fulfilling Christ's commandment on love."

The metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral Joanikije warmly thanked the Russian Orthodox Church for her support of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian people during the trials they have endured in recent history.

"Dear brothers and sisters, thank you for your constant readiness to open up to us your hearts, for your great love which you showed us when we were experiencing things at their worse. When there was war, when the state of Yugoslavia disintegrated, when we endured many trials, the Patriarch of Russia Alexy of blessed memory and then metropolitan and now His Holiness Patriarch Kirill visited us in order to give us good cheer and bring consolation to our people. Of course, they were unable to halt the military conflicts and the bombing of our country, but their spiritual, moral and fraternal aid, their support for us, meant a great deal and gave us the strength to withstand all the temptations which befell us," said metropolitan Joanikije.

"Today, when it is hard for all of the Russian people and all of the Russian Orthodox Church, I would like to thank the Russian Orthodox Church for her attention then, which of course continued further and will do so henceforth." The bishop of the Serbian Orthodox Church expressed his willingness to pray for the children of the Russian Orthodox Church, "for peace and the vanquishing of all afflictions, and for a just resolution of all the trials which the Russian Orthodox Church, and the nation and country of Russia endure today."

"We believe in the strength of the Russian Orthodox Church, which endured the worst trials at the time of the Bolshevik communist regime, which endured persecution and suffering," said the metropolitan,

comparing the Russian Church's magnificence with the beauty of the Church of the New Martyrs and Confessors of the Russia where the service took place.

The metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral Joanikije thanked the vicar abbot of Sretensky monastery Father John (Ludischev) for his hospitality and presented him with a pectoral cross as a gift.

On 18th October 2022, on the feast day of the Synaxis of the Holy Hierarch of Moscow, the metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral participated in the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy in the Dormition Cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin.

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