Acting DECR vice-chairman and delegation of Foundation for Support of Christian Culture and Heritage meet with Bishop Jefrem of Banja Luka



DECR Communication Service, 13.11.2022.

On November 11, the acting vice-chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, and a delegation of the Foundation for Support of Christian Culture and Heritage visited Republika Srpska, an entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Banja Luka, the capital of the republic, they were received by Bishop Jefrem of Banja Luka, in his residence. A

warm and prolonged conversation took place, which was attended by Rector of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour of the Banja Luka diocese Archpriest Dragan Maksimovic, Rector of the Church of the Epiphany in Luka Archpriest Zoran Pajkanovic, Executive Director of the Foundation for Support of Christian Culture and Heritage A. G. Nikitenko.

Bishop Jefrem warmly welcomed the guests, expressing warm feelings for the Russian Orthodox Church and her shrines, for the St. Sergius Laura of the Trinity, in which he was trained fr om 1971 to 1975 at the Moscow Theological Academy. He also shared his judgements on the situation in the world Orthodox community, the need to foster its unity on the basis of unshakable canonical traditions. He also spoke about the development of fraternal cooperation between the Russian and the Serbian Orthodox Churches in the areas of education, pilgrimage and other spheres. In this connection, His Grace Jefrem dwelt in detail on implementing the project for building a Russian-Serbian church in Banja Luka and a spiritual and cultural center attached to it as a symbol of Russian-Serbian friendship. The church is being built according to the design prepared in 2017-2018 by specialists of the Moscow Institute of Architecture on the basis of architecture of the Chudov Monastery in Moscow.

Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk conveyed to the hierarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church greetings and best wishes from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and the DECR chairman, Metropolitan Anthony of Volokolamsk.

The conversation was followed by an exchange of tokens of the meeting.

Then the guests were taken on a tour of the churches in Banja Luka. In the church of the Holy Trinity, they venerated the relics of Holy Martyr Platon, Bishop of Banja Luka who was brutally killed by the Ustashas in 1941 and who is the heavenly patron of the diocese of Banja Luka. They also visited the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour and the church of the Epiphany and went to see the progress made in the construction of the Russian-Serbian church and the spiritual and cultural center.

The same day the delegation visited the Monastery of Blessed Matrona of Moscow in the Ritesic village near the city of Doboj, wh ere they were warmly welcomed by its father superior, Hegumen Isaija (Lukic). The building of the monastery, including the church of the same name, is built in the Russian architectural style since it was intended as a place for holding activities aimed at fostering Russian-Serbian friendship. At present, with the support of the Russian Orthodox Church and with the help of the Foundation for Support of Christian Culture and Heritage, masters of the Moscow Institute of Architecture are painting murals in the monastery’s main church dedicated to Blessed Matrona.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/89791/