



## A festive concert in honour of the 1035th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus' was held in the capital of Bulgaria



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On 27 July 2023, the Russian Cultural and Information Centre hosted festive events organised by the Patriarchal Metochion of the Russian Orthodox Church in Sofia, dedicated to the 1035th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus'. The event was **reported** on the website of the Metochion.

The solemn evening was attended by the Chief Secretary of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church Bishop Gerasim of Melnik, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Bulgaria E.V. Mitrofanova, acting head of the Russian Cultural Information Centre T.M. Dudaev, clergy of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

The festivities were opened by Archimandrite Vassian (Zmeyev), rector of the Russian Orthodox Church's Metochion in Sofia. He spoke about the history of the Baptism of Rus', about the contribution of Bulgarian enlighteners who created in the Bulgarian kingdom centres of spiritual education, Slavic script and culture, which served as a cradle of enlightenment of the Russian and other Slavic peoples. He also spoke about the fact that on that day the Church of St Panteleimon in Knyazhevo **celebrated the 100th anniversary of** the formation of the Russian Orthodox community.

Then there was a concert of sacred music. The choir of the Metochion under the direction of the regent Vasilena Chenova-Stephanova performed hymns and spiritual works by Russian and Bulgarian composers. The vocal works were accompanied by a text in Bulgarian about the historical continuity and unbreakable spiritual ties between the Russian and Bulgarian peoples, the Russian and Bulgarian Orthodox Churches.

At the end of the concert Archpriest Dimitri Tukhchiev presented his book on the history of the Church of the Holy Great Martyr Panteleimon in Knyazhevo and its shrines, and also spoke about Russian priests who served in Bulgaria in the twentieth century and about Russian spiritual traditions in Bulgaria. Of particular interest to historians and the general reader are the first published documents and photographs of the Central State Archive of Bulgaria.

Archimandrite Vassian thanked Archpriest Dimitri Tukhchiev for his efforts to protect and improve the Church of the Holy Great Martyr Panteleimon in Knyazhevo and for his contribution to the study of its history. Certificates of honour were presented to active parishioners of the church, many of whom are descendants of Russian émigrés.

Then the awarding of married couples took place, timed to coincide with the celebration of the Day of Family, Love and Fidelity.

In the foyer of the Russian Cultural Information Centre visitors could see the photo exhibition "Baptism of Rus'. Collection of the State Historical Museum in Moscow" and the exhibition of icons "Silent Sermon. Novgorod icons of the 13th-16th centuries", as well as a video presentation dedicated to the 1035th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus' and the Day of Commemoration of St. Prince Vladimir.