



Delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church visits the fold of the Serbian Orthodox Church



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On September 11, with a blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, a delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church – His Grace Bishop Konstantin of Zarsk, Vicar to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill; Archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, Vice-Chairman of the Department of External Church Relations – arrived to the Republic of Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the morning, the delegation prayed at the liturgy in the church of St. George the

Great Martyr in the city of Bijeljina, after which they were received by Bishop Fotije of Zvornik and Tuzla in his residence. Welcoming the guests, Bishop Fotije underscored the importance of strengthening

fraternal ties between the Russian and the Serbian Orthodox Churches, such ties being very relevant these days when the Orthodox Christian unity is being tested by hardships. In his turn, Bishop Konstantin thanked His Eminence Fotije for his warm hospitality and conveyed greetings from His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. Taking part in the meeting were also Father Superior in Bijeljina Archpriest Ljubo Bogdanovic, and cleric of the church of St. George The Great Martyr Archpriest Goran Nenic.

On the same day, the guests visited the Convent of the Holy Trinity in Tavna, where they were warmly welcomed by retired Bishop Anthony (Jokic) and Mother Superior Martha. The delegation also visited the Convent of Venerable Paraskeva in Bijeljina, where they made a tour of the magnificent cathedral with the nave dedicated to all Russian saints.

On September 12, during the feast of the transfer of relics of Holy and Most-Orthodox Prince St. Alexander Nevsky, Bishop Konstantin of Zaisk and Bishop Fotije of Zvornik and Tuzla celebrated the liturgy at the monastery in Ugljevik dedicated to this saint. Among the concelebrants were hierarchs from the Russian, Serbian and Polish Orthodox Churches. With a blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, Bishop Konstantin presented the monastery with an icon of Holy and Most-Orthodox Prince St. Alexander Nevsky, with a particle of his relics. Among the worshipers were Mother Superior Philothea, Mayor V. Peric of Ugljevik, Chairman of the Russian All-People's Union party Mr. S. N. Baburin, and numerous pilgrims and parishioners. The liturgy was followed by a procession with the cross and a traditional order of bread sharing. After that, the guests were invited to a solemn common meal.

On the same day, the delegation arrived to the city of Sremski Karlovci (Serbia), where they met with Bishop Vasilije of Srem, on September 13. His Grace Vasilije told the guests about the history of his diocese, noting in detail the period after the Russian revolution when Serbia gave shelter to thousands of Russian refugees and when Sremski Karlovci hosted the administrative church centre of the Russian diaspora. The guests also visited the Karlovac Theological Seminary where they met with its rector Archpriest Jovan Milanovic and made a tour of the seminary's museum. In the Cathedral of St. Nicholas, members of the delegation venerated the relics of holy hierarch Arsenije, the second Archbishop of Serbia.

Bishop Konstantin and Archbishop Igor Yakimchuk proceeded with their visit by making a pilgrimage to the monasteries of the famous Fruška Gora mountain. They visited the Grgeteg Convent of the Nativity of Theotokos, where they served a lity for the departed monks in the monastery's cemetery. In the Monastery of Novo Hopovo, the pilgrims made a tour the ancient Cathedral of St. Nicholas and venerated the relics of Great Martyr Theodore Tyron lying in rest at the cathedral. The pilgrimage continued in the Monastery of Great Martyr Panteleimon in Staro Hopovo, where they had a talk with its Father Superior Archimandrite Atanasije. The pilgrimage programme was concluded by a visit to the

Monastery of Holy Archangels in Kovilj, where they were welcomed by Father Superior Chariton.

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