



## Metropolitan Alexander of Astana meets with Serbian Bishop Isihije of Valjevo



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On December 6, Metropolitan Alexander of Astana and Kazakhstan met with a hierarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Bishop Isihije of Valjevo. The meeting took place at the Metropolitan Joseph (Chernov) Religio-Cultural and Administrative Centre in Almaty.

The Serbian hierarch had arrived in Kazakhstan at the invitation of the head of the Kazakhstan Metropolitan District to visit and venerate the holy sites associated with the twentieth-century new martyrs and confessors who had shone forth in the Kazakh land.

Bishop Isihije was accompanied by Priest Filip Jakovljević, secretary of the Valjevo Diocese, and Deacon Dimitrijević Momčilo.

Taking part in the meeting were also Mr Oleg Ovchinnikov, secretary of the Kazakhstan Metropolitan District, Honoured Artist of the Russian Federation; Archimandrite Sergy (Karamyshev), dean of the Astana parishes; Archimandrite Feodosy (Kuryanov), sacristan of the Cathedral of Archangel Michael in the city of Oral; Archpriest Yevgeny Ivanov, head of the Information Department of the Kazakhstan Metropolitan District; Hieromonk Gennady (Burdyuzha), secretary of the Kostanay Diocese; Hieromonk Prokhor (Yendovitsky), head of Metropolitan Alexander's Private Office; Priest Georgy Sidorov, head of the Administrative Secretariat of the head of the Kazakhstan Metropolitan District; Priest Andrei Krutin, rector of the Church of Kazan Icon of the Mother of God in Tobyl; Protodeacon Roman Golovin, head of Metropolitan Alexander's Protocol Office; and staff members of the Almaty Diocesan Administration.

Metropolitan Alexander told Bishop Isihije about the present-life of the Kazakhstan Metropolitan District, including various academic, educational and youth projects and events held in 2023 to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment. He also warmly thanked the Serbian hierarch for taking part in the celebrations in commemoration of the Holy Right-Believing Grand Prince Alexander Nevsky.

In consideration of Bishop Isihije's work aimed at promoting relations between the Valjevo Diocese and the Kazakhstan Metropolitan District, Metropolitan Alexander awarded him with the Order of the Holy Hieroconfessor Nicholas the Metropolitan of Alma-Ata and Kazakhstan and presented him a cross and a panagia. Other members of the Serbian delegation received medals commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Turkestan Diocese.

As a gift for the Valjevo Diocese, Metropolitan Alexander handed over to Bishop Isihije icons containing particles of the holy relics of the heavenly patrons of Kazakhstan – Hieroconfessor Nicholas the Metropolitan of Alma-Ata and the Venerable Confessor Schema-Archimandrite Sebastian, Elder of Karaganda.

With the blessing of His Holiness Serbian Patriarch Porfirije, Bishop Isihije presented to the Kazakhstan Metropolitan District an icon and a particle of the holy relics of St Nicholas (Velimirović) the Bishop of Ohrid and Žiča – one of the most venerated Serbian saints, known all over the world.

Metropolitan Alexander expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the gift and noted that St Nicholas of Serbia is deeply revered by Orthodox Christians in Kazakhstan. St. Nicholas's spiritual exhortations, well-known among the faithful, strike a chord with many people, both active church-goers and those who seek their path to God.

During the meeting, Bishop Isihije shared his impressions of his visit to Astana and Almaty.

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