Sofia celebrates 147th anniversary of its liberation from Ottoman yoke



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4th January 2025 marked the 147th anniversary of Sofia's liberation from the Ottoman rule. In January 1878, the liberation troops of the Russian Imperial Army under the command of General Iosif Gurko had entered the city.

On the day of the celebrations, His Holiness Patriarch Daniil of Bulgaria officiated at the Divine Liturgy in the Cathedral of St. Nedelya (Kyriaki) of the Metropolis of Sofia. Concelebrating with His Holiness were Bishop Isaac of Velbazhda, Second Vicar of the Metropolis of Sofia; Archpriest Vladimir Tyshchuk, representative of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' to the Patriarch of Bulgaria and rector of the Patriarchal Metochion in Sofia; Archimandrite Vasily (Savov), rector of St. Nedelya Cathedral; and the clergy of the Metropolis of Sofia.

During the memorial Litiya, His Holiness Patriarch Daniil lifted up prayers for the blessed repose of the souls of the servants of God – Emperor Alexander II the Tsar-Liberator, General Iosif Gurko and all the Orthodox Russian and Bulgarian soldiers who had laid down their live in the battlefield for the liberation of Bulgaria, Telegram channel of the Patriarchal Metochion **reports**.

Among those who attended the Liturgy were Mr Boris Gromov, director of the House of Moscow in Sofia; politician Rumen Petkov, public figures and numerous faithful.

After the Liturgy, a thanksgiving moleben was celebrated before the “Joy of All Who Sorrow” Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos, which General Gurko had had with him during that campaign and later presented to the church.

The divine service was followed by a homily delivered by the Primate of the Bulgarian Church. His Holiness spoke about the feat of General Gurko’s troops and the help local dwellers had given them. As Patriarch Daniil also noted, the Ottoman army had failed in its intention to burn down the city and kill as many local citizens as possible before withdrawing from Sofia, contrary to what had happened in Stara Zagora and other localities, Pravblog Telegram channel **reports**. His Holiness also pointed out the importance of commemorating with gratitude the liberators – Russian soldiers and Bulgarian militiamen. The Bulgarian Patriarch emphasized that the gift of freedom must not be used in a way that makes people enslaved by fears, passions, hatred and divisions.

Concluding the celebrations was a procession to the monuments to the Tsar-Liberator, General Gurko and Sofia militiamen.

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