



## **Primates of the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches celebrate Liturgy at Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius**



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On April 25, 2025, Bright Friday, the feast of the Life-Giving Spring Icon of the Mother of God, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus' and His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije of Serbia visited the Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius.

The delegation of the Serbian Orthodox Church, headed by His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije of Serbia, arrived in Moscow on April 21. On April 22, a meeting between the Primates of the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches took place at the Patriarchal and Synodal Residence in Moscow's Danilov Monastery. That same day, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije of Serbia met with the President of the Russian Federation, V.V. Putin, in the Kremlin.

During the visit, His Holiness the Primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church was accompanied by: Archbishop Irenaeus of Novi Sad and Metropolitan of Bačka, Bishop Stefan of Remeziana, representative of the Serbian Patriarch to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus', Nenad Popović, Minister of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Archimandrite Hariton (Pavlica), abbot of Kovilj Monastery, Protopresbyter Georgije Stoisaļević, Chief of the Serbian Patriarch's Office, Protodeacon Radomir Vrućinić, rector of St. Sava Seminary in Belgrade, Protodeacon Radoica Žagran, Hierodeacon Justin (Živanić), resident of Kovilj Monastery, Deacon Ivan Vasilyevich, Subdeacons D. Nakić and V. Elič.

At the walls of the Dormition Cathedral of the Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius , a ceremonial welcome was first held for His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije of Serbia, followed by His Holiness Patriarch Kirill. The Primates were greeted by Bishop Kirill of Sergiyev Posad and Dmitrov, abbot of the Lavra, and O.V. Yerokhanova, head of Sergiyev Posad Municipal District of Moscow Oblast. Inside the cathedral, they were met by bishops and clergy of the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches.

In the Dormition Cathedral, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije celebrated the Divine Liturgy.

Concelebrating with the Primates were: Metropolitan Gregory of Voskresensk, Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, First Vicar of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' for the city of Moscow, abbot of Novospassky Stavropegial Monastery, Archbishop Irenaeus of Novi Sad and Metropolitan of Bačka, Metropolitan Feognost of Kashira, Chairman of the Synodal Department for Monasteries and Monasticism, abbot of Donskoy Stavropegial Monastery, Bishop Stefan of Remeziana, Archbishop Thomas of Odintsovo and Krasnogorsk, head of the Administrative Secretariat of the Moscow Patriarchate, Bishop Siluan of Pavlovo-Posad, Deputy Chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate, Bishop Kirill of Sergiyev Posad and Dmitrov, Bishop Alexy of Ramenskoye, personal secretary of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill, Archimandrite Macarius (Veretennikov), Doctor of Church History, resident of the Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, Archimandrite Hariton (Pavlica), abbot of Kovilj Monastery of the Bačka Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Protopriest Nikolay Balashov, advisor to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus', Protopriest Igor Yakimchuk, Deputy Chairman of the DECR, Archimandrite Diodor (Didkovsky), resident of the Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, Protopresbyter Georgije Stoisaļević, Chief of the Serbian Patriarch's Office, Hegumen Dionysius (Shlyonov), abbot of Andreevsky Stavropegial Monastery, Archimandrite Zachariah (Shkurikhin), resident of the Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius , Clergy of the Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius in holy orders, Serbian clergy—members of the delegation, and clergy of Moscow, according to the Press Service of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'.

Attending the service were: S.A. Pakhomov, Chairman of the State Duma Committee of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on Construction and Housing and Communal Services, Executive Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation for the Preservation, Restoration, and Development of the Historical Appearance of Sergiyev Posad, Moscow Oblast, Momčilo Babić, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Serbia to the Russian Federation, O.V. Yerokhanova, head of Sergiyev Posad Municipal District, V.A. Levin, Acting General Director of HPF "Sofrino", I.S. Kharkov, head of the jewelry and art workshop "Apostol", Staff of the Embassy of Serbia in Russia.

The liturgical hymns were performed by the brotherly choir of the Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius under the direction of Hieromonk Nestor (Volkov) and the second choir of the Moscow Theological Academy under the direction of Alexander Leventsov.

The patriarchal service was broadcast live on the TV channels "Spas" and "Soyuz," as well as on the official website of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarchia.ru.

The service was conducted in Church Slavonic and Serbian.

During the augmented litany, special petitions were offered, and the Primate of the Russian Church read a prayer for the Holy Rus'.

The sermon before Communion was delivered by Hieromonk Nektary (Sokolov), a resident of the Holy Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius.

At the conclusion of the Liturgy, Bishop Kirill of Sergiyev Posad and Dmitrov, on behalf of the Lavra's brotherhood, greeted the Primates of the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches. Bishop Kirill presented His Holiness Patriarch Kirill with a painting of the Lavra created by A.S. Gorbunov, a member of the Union of Artists of Russia, and His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije with an icon of St. Sergius of Radonezh.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill addressed the Primate of the Serbian Church with words of greeting and presented him with a decorative Easter egg as a memento of the service.

Then, His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije addressed His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and all those gathered in the church with the Paschal greeting, "Christ is Risen!" The Primate of the Serbian Church emphasized that the Resurrection of Christ is the Lord's victory, but also our victory through our faith: "Your Holiness! Indeed, there is victory, but before victory comes the Cross, and we must know that without the Cross, there will be no resurrection. However, not every cross leads us to resurrection—only if it is the Cross of

Christ, if it is the Orthodox Cross, if the Cross is founded on the values of the Gospel."

"Thank you for your brotherly love, for the love of your Church. You know that from our side, there has always been love: the love of the Serbian Church for the Russian Church, and the love of the Serbian people for your people. This brotherly love has endured all trials. We see your Church as an example, as a paradigm. Knowing that you pray for us, we always pray for you personally, Your Holiness, and for the entire fullness of your Church," said His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije, stressing the importance of Orthodox unity and wishing God's help to the Russian Orthodox Church and its Primate.

In his response, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said: "I thank you, Your Holiness, once again for your visit and for our joint prayer, through which we have felt and recognized even more clearly the closeness of our peoples and our Churches. And if this is so, then we must follow the historical path, which is never easy, preserving our faith, our devotion to the Lord, and—if we speak of the horizontal dimension of Christian life—canonical unity, unity in love between our Orthodox Churches. And may God grant that the relations between the Russian and Serbian Churches serve as an example for the entire Orthodox world, which, I believe, is in need of such relations. I thank you wholeheartedly for your visit, for your participation in today's service, and I ask you to convey my love and blessing to the pious Serbian people. May the Lord preserve you!"

Thereafter, the Primates of the Russian and Serbian Orthodox Churches performed a blessing of the waters in the Dormition Cathedral, after which they led a procession of the cross around the cathedral.

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