



## His Holiness Patriarch Kirill meets with the primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church



**DECR Communication service, 15.03.2024**

On 15th March 2024 a meeting took place at the Patriarchal and Synodal Residence of Saint Daniel of Moscow Monastery between His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill and His Holiness the Patriarch of Serbia Porfirije.

His Holiness the Patriarch of Serbia Porfirije had arrived in Moscow to attend the funeral and burial of the representative of the Patriarch of Serbia to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, the dean of the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul at the Yauza Gates, which serves as the representation church (metochion) of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Moscow, the bishop of Moravica Anthony. Bishop Anthony reposed in the Lord on 11th March 2024.

Attending the meeting on behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church were the chairman of the Department

of External Church Relations the metropolitan of Volokolamsk Anthony and the advisor to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia archpriest Nikolai Balashov. The Serbian Orthodox Church was also represented by the bishop of Bačka Irinej.

Before the meeting began the primates visited the domestic church of the Patriarchal residence.

In conveying his heartfelt good wishes upon greeting the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia noted that in the past the representatives of the two churches held steadfastly to a common position: "In the person of the representatives of the Serbian Church we have always had the most reliable brothers. And if by the grace of God we have achieved any type of success, then this has always been with the participation of our brothers from the Church of Serbia. This is why we always remember with thanks our mutual cooperation."

In spite of the fact that the reason for the visit to Moscow by the current primate of the Serbian Church brought no cause for joy, the Serbian Church thanks God for this visit, His Holiness Patriarch Porfirije said in reply: "Death does not exist for us Christians. There is only life. We know that life is a gift from God and that life eternal is not on earth but in the kingdom of God."

On 13th March 1976 the present Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, then archimandrite Kirill, was elected bishop and on 14th March his episcopal consecration took place, the head of the Serbian Church reminded those present, wishing His Holiness Kirill many years and good health.

The late bishop of Moravica Anthony was a symbol of the ties between the two churches and the two fraternal peoples, stated the primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church. "We are grateful that you received him with such love as a son, as your brother and our brother, so that in his person the world could see the unity of the Russian and Serbian Churches and the Russian and Serbian Orthodox peoples," he said to Patriarch Kirill.

"There is a Russian saying that brothers and friends recognize each other in adversity. When everything is fine, then you have many friends; when you are wealthy, it is impossible to get rid of these 'friends', but should you endure a little poverty, then they go away. And if dangers arise, then these 'friends' are nowhere to be seen, and they often go over to the side of where threats arise," said the head of the Russian Orthodox Church.

He stated that the current-day situation in the world is testimony to this truth: "It immediately becomes apparent who is your friend in both joy and adversity, and for whom good relations – including with the Russian Church and Russia herself – were simply temporary and aimed at gaining some sort of advantage for themselves."

“That is why we in the Russian Orthodox Church value so highly the bilateral relationship between the two churches. We know that the Serbian people think well of Russia and that this relationship will never disappear, that it is never a pretense, and that it will remain the same as it always has done throughout history. Bishop Irinej is a living witness to our joint endeavours, he represents all that is best in the Serbian Church, including in international forums when it was often the case that we were the only ones who had an alternative viewpoint. But this has always testified to the deep mutual cooperation and the sincere fraternal relationship between our two churches,” said Patriarch Kirill.

“Your representative bishop Anthony achieved many good things as a pastor too. He was well loved by the people here. We shall pray for the repose of our departed brother bishop Anthony and we believe that the Lord will receive him in his heavenly mansions,” His Holiness Patriarch Kirill said in conclusion.

During the ensuing brotherly conversation, the two primates discussed in the spirit of love and mutual understanding a wide spectrum of issues concerning inter-ecclesiastical cooperation and joint witness to Holy Orthodoxy, as well as the current situation in the Orthodox world.

Then His Holiness Patriarch Kirill greeted all the members of the delegation of the Serbian Orthodox Church, including the bishops of Upper Karlova Gerasim, of Valjevo Isihije, of Remesiana Stefan, of Jegra Nektarije, and of Toplica Petr, as well as the Serbian labour and social security minister Nikola Selakovic, who had come to represent the Serbian president Aleksandar Vučić at the funeral of the bishop of Moravica Anthony.

As a gift to remember the visit, Patriarch Kirill presented to His Holiness the Patriarch of Serbia Profirije two encolpions and a cross, to the accompanying bishops encolpions, to the director of the cabinet of the Patriarch of Serbia archpriest George Stoislavlevic a decorated cross, and gifts to the other members of the delegation.

The Patriarch of Serbia Profirije presented to the head of the Russian Church two encolpions and a decorated cross.

Attending the reception on behalf of the Russian Orthodox Church were the chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchy the metropolitan of Voskresensk Gregory and the director of the administrative secretariat of the Moscow Patriarchy the archbishop of Odintsovo and Krasnogorsk Thomas, deputy chairmen of the DECR archpriest Nikolai Lischenyuk and archpriest Igor Yakimchuk, the head of the protocol service of the DECR abbot Theophan (Lukyanov) and representative of the DECR secretariat for inter-Orthodox relations A. Yu. Khoshev.

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