

Church of St. Seraphim (Sobolev) to be built in Sofia



A new church in honor of one of the 20th century's great Holy Hierarchs is set to be built in the Sofia, according to a report prepared by Mayor Dimitar Dimov, reports stolica.bg.

St. Seraphim (Sobolev) labored in the Bulgarian capital for the last 29 years of his life and is known throughout Bulgaria, and beyond, as ardent defender of the purity of the Orthodox faith and a wonderworker. His relics are housed and venerated in the St. Nicholas Russian Church in central Sofia.

The proposal passed to the Committee for Culture and Education on Monday, and council members are set to vote on granting approval to begin construction on the Church of St. Seraphim of Sofia the Wonderworker today. The church is to be allotted a total space of 23,616 sq. ft., with the church building itself taking up 2,798.6 sq. ft.

St. Seraphim (1881-1950) stands a link uniting the Bulgarian and Russian Churches. He was a hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, though in the spring of 1921, he moved to Bulgaria, where he remained to the end of his days.

Living in ceaseless ascetic endeavor, from abstinence and difficult living conditions, Vladyka contracted tuberculosis. Despite his serious illness, he cared for his flock with true pastoral fervor. He served frequently and gave sermons three times a week, calling his flock to repentance, to grace-filled reformation and to the most basic virtue—Christian humility. Especially noteworthy were St. Seraphim's sermons on Forgiveness Sunday, when, after his appeal, many people who had quarreled with each other for years tearfully begged forgiveness of one another.

The joint commission of the Russian and Bulgarian Orthodox Churches for the canonization of Archbishop Seraphim was set up in accordance with the decisions of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church of October 22, 2015, and of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church of September 25, 2015.

St. Seraphim was canonized by unanimous decision of the Holy Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church on February 3, 2016. A delegation from the Bulgarian Orthodox Church also participated in the session. The main celebration of canonization then took place on February 26 in the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. Alexander Nevsky in Sofia, celebrated by His Holiness Patriarch Neofit of Bulgaria, with Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev) of the Russian Church concelebrating.

St. Seraphim is commemorated in Sofia every year on February 26, traditionally with Bulgarian and Russian hierarchs concelebrating. This year's service was celebrated by His Eminence Metropolitan Tikhon of Vladimir and Suzdal of the Russian Church with His Grace Bishop Polycarp of Belogradchik of the Bulgarian Church and a number of Bulgarian clergymen.

– Source: orthochristian.com