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Serbian gov’t funding monastery-based home for persons with disabilities



According to a new agreement, the Serbian state has assumed full financial responsibility for the Home for Children with Developmental Disabilities operating at a convent in Izvor, Paraćin, 100 miles southeast of Belgrade.

The agreement was signed by Abbess Maria of the St. Petka Monastery, where the home has operated since the 1940s, and the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Veterans’ and Social Affairs, reports the Serbian Orthodox Church.

The state support thus allows the nuns to continue their daily care for 90 female residents.

The monastery was recognized earlier this month with the state’s Sretenje Order for its contributions to humanitarian and charitable work.

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The home for children and women with the most severe mental and physical developmental disabilities was founded at the St. Petka Monastery in 1946. In 1963, the monastery allowed the state to build a social welfare facility on its land, which today exists within the monastery grounds. The monastery cooperates with

the Center for Social Work in Paraćin, and the nuns from the monastery provide daily care for the residents who cannot live with their families. The home is a unique institution in Serbia’s social welfare system.

As of 2021, there were five nurses working at the home in addition to the nuns, with regular visits from a general practitioner and a neuropsychiatrist.

Efforts are made to have all residents baptized. Depending on the health and mental condition of the residents, they’re included in the liturgical life of the monastery. Some attend services more frequently, and some even know how to sing certain liturgical hymns and receive the Holy Sacraments during the Divine Liturgy. For all others who can’t attend the service, the priest brings the Holy Sacraments to the home and gives them Communion there.

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