

Ministry of Culture begins taking inventory at Kiev Caves Lavra



A special commission of the Ministry of Culture has begun taking inventory of and checking the existing Church valuables and sacred objects that were transferred to the Kiev Caves Lavra since 1988, when the monastery was reopened after being closed since 1961, reports the site of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

The commission was created by the initiative of the Ministry of Culture and includes employees of the Ministry and the National Kiev Caves Lavra Museum. They began their work yesterday, on the first day of the Nativity Fast, checking the presence of relics in the Near and Far Caves, where the incorrupt relics of numerous saints repose.

OrthoChristian reported in September that the Ministry had begun taking inventory of Church property in general throughout the country, which the Chancellor of the Ukrainian Church His Eminence Metropolitan Anthony of Boryspil and Brovary warned could be a precursor to the seizure of churches from the canonical Church.

The check of the Kiev Caves Lavra comes just as the Ministry of Justice canceled the registration of the buildings of the Pochaev Lavra to the monastery and then

the Cabinet of Ministers canceled the 2003 agreement whereby the buildings were transferred to the monastery for its usage.

Monks of the Kiev Caves Lavra reported to the Ukrainian site Vesti that the check began with the Near Caves around 6:00 PM yesterday. Moreover, they reported that the monastery had received no prior notice of the check.

“We did not receive any official documents that such actions would be carried out, but we were forced to let these people in. This is some kind of nihilism and complete disrespect for the sacred objects and the faithful. People who came from various parts of our country are deprived of the chance to venerate the holy relics because they’re carrying out this inventory in the Near Caves,” the monks said.

The abbot of the holy monastery, His Eminence Metropolitan Pavel of Vyshgorod and Chernobyl, discussed the procedure for checking the valuables with the commission members yesterday and the commission’s work is being carried out under the supervision of the monks, the guards of the Caves, and members of the monastery’s Spiritual Council.

This is the first time that such a check is being carried out in the 30-year history of the revived Kiev Caves Lavra, a fact that has raised some concerns within the Church, as noted by Archpriest Alexander Bakhov, the head of the Ukrainian Church’s legal department.

“On the basis of the Ministry of Culture’s order, the commission of the reserve is checking the property that was transferred for the Lavra’s use. It’s their property, and they have the right to check how the Lavra is using it,” Fr. Alexander told Interfax-Religion today.

“The question is,” he added, “why they decided to check it for the first time in 30 years!”

Moreover, monks of the Lavra told Vesti that the monastery itself carries out such a check annually.