

President Radev: Zographou Monastery Has Safeguarded Bulgarian Spirituality for Over 1,000 Years



Bulgarian President Rumen Radev joined celebrations of the feast of the Zographou Monastery, the Bulgarian monastery in Mount Athos, on Saturday. Hundreds of pilgrims from Bulgaria and the Balkans flocked to the place for the occasion, the President's Press Secretariat reported.

Radev said: "The Zographou Monastery is one of the most cherished and important spiritual hubs of the Bulgarian people, not just because it is the repository of invaluable manuscripts, icons and other artifacts, but also because it has safeguarded the Bulgarians' faith, spirituality, memory and language for more than a thousand years."

The St George Zographou Monastery is one of 20 Eastern Orthodox monasteries in Mt Athos, the autonomous monastic polity in Northern Greece. It was founded in the late 9th or early 10th century by Bulgarians from Ohrid and is regarded as the

historical Bulgarian monastery in Mt Athos. It is traditionally inhabited by Bulgarian Orthodox monks. The Zographou Monastery's library contains a rich collection of medieval manuscripts and the original draft of Paisius of Hilendar's "Slav-Bulgarian History" (1762), a seminal book of the Bulgarian National Revival Period.

President Radev conferred the Order of the Balkan Range, First Class, on the hegumen of the monastery, Archimandrite Ambrose. The highest Bulgarian state honour was bestowed on Ambrose for his contribution to strengthening Orthodox monasticism in Mt Athos and promoting Bulgaria's relations with Greece. Ambrose has served as hegumen at Zographou since 1997 and has been instrumental in preserving it as a Bulgarian monastery, rehabilitating the complex, preserving its cultural and historical heritage, maintaining its library and attracting pilgrims. The monastery plays an important role in organizing and financing the education of Bulgarian children in a Sunday school in Thessaloniki.

Saturday's celebrations were also attended by Metropolitan Seraphim of Nevrokop and Mt Athos Civil Governor Konstantinos Dimtsas. RY/VE

— Source: Zographou Monastery, Mt Athos & bta.bg