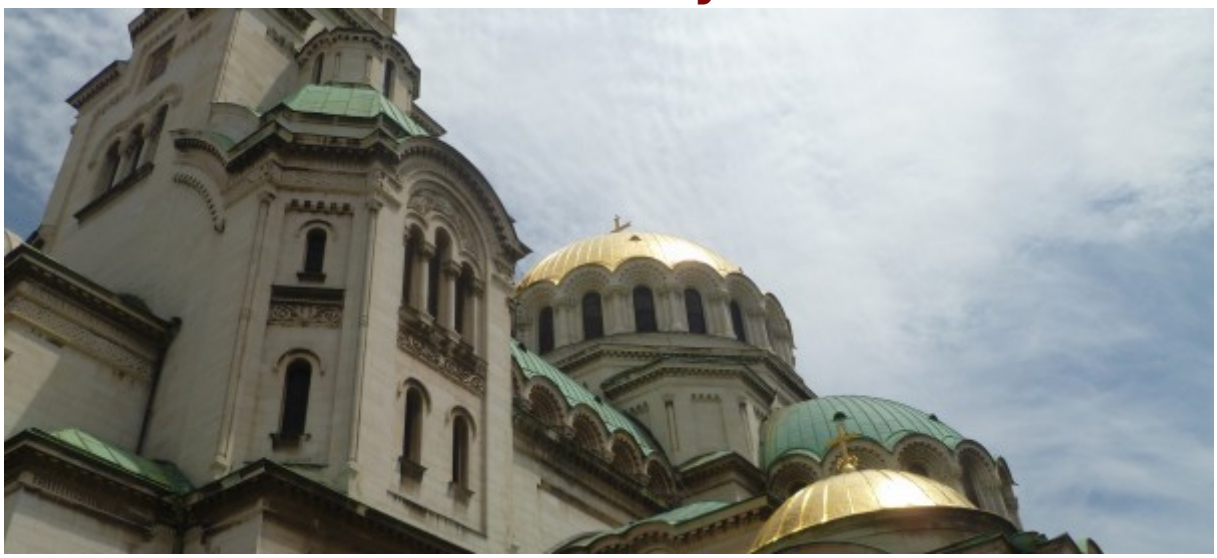
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Bells to peal as Bulgarian Orthodox Church celebrates 150th anniversary of Exarchate



A service of thanksgiving prayer, accompanied by the pealing of church bells, will be held on February 28 2020 at 10am in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the issuing of the decree by the Ottoman Sultan on the Bulgarian Exarchate, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church's governing body, the Holy Synod, has announced.

At the close of the prayer service, the Patriarchal and Synodal message will be read on the occasion of the anniversary, the Holy Synod said.

According to the history of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church on the Holy Synod's website, in 1870, by a decree (firman) of the Sultan, the Ottoman government restored the Bulgarian Patriarchate under the name of "Bulgarian Exarchate".

According to article 10 of the firman, it included in its diocese all Bulgarian regions.

In 1871 a Council of the Church and the People took place with representative of the dioceses in North Bulgaria, Thrace and Macedonia. A total of 12 clerics, among them five prelates, and 36 laymen took part. The Statute of the Bulgarian Exarchate was adopted.

According to the church's website, the Bulgarian Exarchate's diocese became the criterion for the Great Powers in determining the ethnic boundaries of the Bulgarian people immediately after the April Uprising (1876).

Until 1913 it governed quite a number of dioceses, in Northern and Southern

Bulgaria, in Macedonia and Adrianople Thrace.

After the First World War, by virtue of the peace treaties, the Bulgarian Exarchate was deprived of its dioceses in Macedonia and Aegean Thrace.

The establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 represented a transitory historical stage leading to the restoration of the Bulgarian Patriarchate, which had ceased to exist at the end of the 14th century, the **church's website said**.

— Source: sofiaglobe.com