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30 churches being built in Moscow this year despite pandemic restrictions



Despite the restrictions imposed due to the coronavirus, the construction of new Orthodox churches in Moscow is ahead of schedule this year.

“If in just one district we start building three churches, then we will exceed the overall plan of our program for building churches in 2020,” His Grace Bishop Paramon, head of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Financial and Economic Department, said during an inspection of building projects in Moscow’s Eastern district, reports Interfax-Religion.

Nine churches have already been built and put into use this year, and another nine are ready. “In total, this year, despite the pandemic, construction workers made a breakthrough—basically, the construction of 18 churches was completed, and we started building at least 10-12 more throughout Moscow this year,” commented State Duma Deputy Vladimir Resin, the curator of the 200 Program that has been building churches throughout the capital over the past decade.

The program aims to build enough churches for every resident of Moscow to have one within walking distance. It was launched 10 years ago at the initiative of Patriarch Kirill.

The construction of churches under the program is funded exclusively by charitable donations. In July, Deputy Resin reported that nearly \$41 million are donated annually by sponsors and parishioners for the construction of churches. The program is the largest charity project in modern Russian history.

The churches are becoming spiritual and social centers in their districts, noted Metropolitan Ignaty of Vologda, who co-authored a new book dedicated to the program’s 10th anniversary, “thus, large-scale activities are being carried out to educate and unite our citizens, to strengthen the spiritual bonds of our society. Let us hope that with God’s help, the seeds that we plant today in the young soil will bear much fruit.”

The book has attracted more attention to the program, Deputy Resin said, and people from other areas of Russia have begun to request for certain churches in their regions to be restored or for similar programs to be launched.

To date, half of the originally planned churches have been built, while the 200 Program itself has exceeded its original goal of 200 churches.

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