

## **Patriarch Irinej and Minister Loncar called on citizens to respect epidemiological measures during slava celebrations**



His Holiness Irinej, Serbian Patriarch, and Dr. Zoran Loncar, Minister of Health in the Government of the Republic of Serbia, called on all citizens of Serbia yesterday to adhere to anti-epidemic measures in the next period, and during slava celebrations, in order to preserve public health.

At today's meeting at the Patriarchate, Belgrade, which was also attended by director of the Clinic for Infectious and Tropical Diseases, Dr. Goran Stevanovic, Minister Loncar informed His Holiness Patriarch Irinej about the current epidemiological situation in our country, as well as about the preparedness of the state health system for the new peak of the coronavirus. On that occasion, the Minister pointed out that medical staff would do everything to preserve health of our citizens this time as well, but that it was necessary to respect the measures in order to keep the epidemic under control.

His Holiness Irinej, Serbian Patriarch, pointed out that the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Ministry of Health had the same goal – health and well-being of the citizens of our country, and called on all citizens to show solidarity and unity.

Slava celebrations are great events that symbolize Serbian spirituality, inherit

Serbian centuries-long tradition, gather together and preserve Serbian families, and today, in times of epidemic, they have a special significance as well, because if they are celebrated and performed in an inadequate way, they can negatively affect public health.

In accordance with that, His Holiness and Minister Loncar called on the citizens to adhere to anti-epidemiological measures in every situation, and to celebrate the slava in a true liturgical way, above all prayerfully, and not in a way that could endanger health of our beloved ones. This for the reason more that the slava is a liturgical rite and joyful prayerful gathering, and not an occasion for intemperance or, in the current circumstances, for gathering lots of people in a closed room of small dimensions.

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