

## **Priest Zoran Mamuchevski: “When evil passes, we look with hope that good is now coming”**



“I prayed for the health of the doctors while I was in the hospital, because I saw how difficult it was while they had to tend to the numerous patients. And no one is insured against this insidious disease,” says priest Zoran Mamuchevski to BNR correspondent in the region of Veliko Tarnovo, Zdravka Maslyankova, only days after defeating Covid-19 with the help of doctors at the hospital in the town of Gorna Oryahovitsa.

Priest Zoran is 35 years old and is from North Macedonia. He completed his studies in Cambridge but he chose the small town of Gorna Oryahovitsa, only 10 km from Veliko Tarnovo, as his second home.

“Everyone says to themselves – this is a virus that does not affect young people, and I am a person who plays sports and almost does not get sick. But unfortunately, no one can say for sure that the virus will pass them by. Anyone can develop complications, this disease is very insidious,” says the priest. He recalls that the symptoms of the coronavirus infection suddenly struck him. Most unexpectedly he got severe muscle aches, had a fever and felt extreme exhaustion. Then the young priest isolated himself and sought medical attention.

“The first thing I did was to quarantine myself so that I can take responsibility for other people. I stayed home, locked myself in, and my GP prescribed therapy.”

“The symptoms were very strange, first you feel nothing, and then you start shivering, you have a high fever, until at one point I felt shortness of breath and then I went to take an X-ray of my chest. It really turned out that I had bilateral pneumonia and I had to be hospitalized.”

At the hospital, Father Zoran Mamuchevski saw an elderly family being discharged one day, and immediately replaced by their son, who was receiving oxygen treatment and whose condition was deteriorating. He also saw patients die, despite the care of doctors and nurses.

“The man whose hospital bed I took, so to speak, was on oxygen, unable to breathe and was transferred to the intensive care unit. The other person next to me also had difficulty breathing, pain, coughed very hard and could not get up because he was dizzy. There was a woman who had begun to improve, but unfortunately she died. And at some point you do not know what effects this virus will bring to your body. I also saw a lot of hospitalized doctors, some of them also in serious condition. This disease destroys you not only physically, but also mentally, it just crushes you, so it is important to maintain one’s mental health, to maintain clarity of thought.

Now Father Zoran is recovering from a severe coronavirus infection at home. There, his three children also contracted the disease, but asymptotically. His wife is also feeling good as she is about to give birth to their fourth child at any moment. “As evil passes, we look to the future with hope and a spark that something good is coming,” says the priest.

“This ordeal will pass and we must be aware that we will all go this way and that it is not something we must somehow deny. I have many acquaintances who have gone through the disease – some in a more severe form, others in a milder form. The most important thing is to keep calm and have faith, to remain responsible to each other and not to enter into conspiracy theories that this is all a scam”.

After the quarantine is over, Father Zoran will return to the Church of the Holy Three Saints in Gorna Oryahovitsa. There the work has not been interrupted for a single day. From the social canteen there, a hundred people in need are given a hot lunch every day.

Edited by Gergana Mancheva

Based on an interview of Zdravka Maslyankova, BNR correspondent in Veliko Tarnovo region

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