

## **Patriarch Porfirije meets with President Vucic**



His Holiness Porfirije, Serbian Patriarch met with the President of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Aleksandar Vucic in the building of the Presidency of the Republic of Serbia in Belgrade, on February 24, 2021.

After the meeting with Patriarch Porfirije, President Aleksandar Vucic said that they discussed all important issues in the relations between the state and the Church and that he informed the new primate of the Serbian Orthodox Church about all key issues of importance for the state of Serbia, which are without a doubt, and of great importance to the Church. The Patriarch Porfirije said: – Only through dialogue and conversation can we get to know each other and create preconditions for overcoming temptations and misunderstandings.

– I had the honor to host His Holiness and to discuss all important issues and to inform him about all key issues that are important for the Church itself, said President Vucic and pointed out that he informed the Patriarch about the factual situation in Kosovo and Metohija and, with the political facts and political negotiations that are ahead of us, about Serbia's position.

– We talked about how and in what way to preserve peace, save people's lives, how to help them economically and there is agreement on that issue, said President Vucic and added that he was grateful that he was able to listen to him about the overall pressures on our country. – In the conditions of deep division of

the world, where there is no unipolarity, no bipolarity, but multipolarity, many will try and do their best to show their strength and power on someone smaller, our job is to see that it is not us, but to preserve our interests, said the President.

-The state, as much as it helps all other religious communities, even more strongly in accordance with the possibilities, would help the reconstruction of our temples and shrines wherever the Serbian Orthodox Church operates both in the country and abroad, especially in former Yugoslavia, things that would calm all kinds of passions, without using the words insults, pointed out Mr. Vucic.

- The relationship between the state and the Church is very important, Vucic said and added that when the state and the Church achieve the common goal and when they work together and when they fight, then Serbia will be the first in Europe on many issues. - When that is not the case, then Serbia represents an easy target, not only for every eagle but also for crows, Vucic underlines.

- I am glad that I could learn a lot from Patriarch Porfirije and when you talk to him you have an excess of shame that you cannot reach his knowledge, points out the President of Serbia who announced that the state is ready to help and will build a complete park in front of the Memorial Cathedral of Saint Sava. - We will help to finish the finest works in the Saint Sava Cathedral, we have many ideas to invest money in places where Serbs died, not only in Jasenovac, said President Vucic.

President Vucic mentioned that future meetings will be a common occurrence and that he will always welcome a meeting with the Patriarch in the belief that they can do a lot for our people.

Patriarch Porfirije: The goal of the Church is to collect, build bridges, dull blades

Serbian Patriarch Porfirije pointed out that today at the meeting with President Vucic, he had the opportunity to hear "in the shortest terms the elementary basis of geopolitics in the narrow sense of the word."

- First of all, I indicated that I am not a politician, not because I have no affinity for politics, but because I think that the Church is a conciliar organism which, no matter how difficult, sometimes impossible, has the goal to collect, build bridges, dull blades and overcome polarization. First of all, to preach the meaning of each individual, but also of entire nations, regardless of the circumstances, said the Patriarch and emphasized that often we do not choose the circumstances, but they are an expression of God's providence and for that reason, we have no right to complain to anyone, but to roll up our sleeves and face the predicaments and difficulties as a task that we must solve.

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- Be aware that when we have solved one task, the next one is certainly even more difficult, the Patriarch emphasized.

-On this occasion, I said what is the expression of the entire Assembly of the Serbian Orthodox Church that we will do all in our power, as spiritual shepherds, to make our people live better, but not to the detriment of others, aware that only through dialogue and conversation we can get to know each other and acknowledge each other's values and then create a precondition for overcoming temptations and misunderstandings, which unfortunately there are many, the Patriarch emphasized.

- It remains that all together, each from his position - we as the Church and the faithful people on the one hand, and the state and state institutions, on the other hand, do everything for the benefit of our people, and not at the expense of others, said Patriarch Porfirije and thanked President Vucic for his presence at his enthronement and the words he addressed to him afterward.

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# Saint Joseph the Hesychast

