

Patriarch Porfirije: Only in communion we can have primordial joy and peace



- Maybe sometimes God offers a temptation to all of us so that through material damage we would have the opportunity to awaken in ourselves what is human and to make an effort to overcome each of our narrowness, egoism, closedness and to meet the other, Serbian Patriarch Porfirije said on his first pastoral visit to Banija.

For his first pastoral visit the new elected Serbian Patriarch Porfirije chose Banija. On 27 February 2021, one week after he became the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church former Metropolitan of Zagreb-Ljubljana, in an organization of the Metropolitanate of Zagreb-Ljubljana and the Serbian National Council visited the area that was destroyed in a devastating earthquake a few months ago.

After the visit of the Kukolec family in Majske Poljane, Patriarch Porfirije addressed the residents of Banija and journalists, emphasizing that this is the first pastoral

activity since he was elected to the throne of his great predecessors.

-When this unfortunate earthquake appeared, we have been trying to be with people who need help. And they are fully aware that this is first aid and that real true engagements are yet to come. Of course, led by Bishop Gerasim, who is the Bishop of Gornji Karlovac, and with the help of all the good people, at the beginning of the City of Belgrade, we managed to raise certain funds and provide a little more than a hundred containers. Since then, people have been constantly calling and sending funds. Our intention is to repair houses and auxiliary facilities in the time ahead, where people keep their livestock and thus earn something from their work. What is important for me is that despite the troubles that people are facing here, it was seen that people cannot without people and that people need people. Maybe sometimes God offers a temptation to all of us so that through material damage we have the opportunity to awaken in ourselves what is human and to make an effort to overcome each of our narrowness, egoism, closedness and to meet the other and thus, rejoicing over that meeting, we realize that united we will easily renew the material damage and, more importantly, we understand that only when we are together we can have primordial joy and primordial peace, Patriarch Porfirije said.

The Patriarch then told the story of a pious man who asked God to show him what heaven was and what hell was: -An angel appeared to him and took him to the hall where there was a huge pot of food and with spoons that were bigger than their hands so there was no way they could get to the food. That's hell, the angel told him. When someone wants everything for himself and he never has enough, so he stays hungry, Patriarch Porfirije said and continued: -The angel took the man to another room, where there was the same big cauldron and the same big spoons, but people fed from them each other, so that everyone both ate and rejoiced with each other. We must keep that picture in mind here, not only in Banija, but to follow us throughout our lives, said Patriarch Porfirije and announced that, with the help of Bishop Gerasim, his monastics and volunteers, he will be even more present in the affected area and not only by prayer and soul, but also physically.

It is planned that after the visit of His Holiness to the Banija families, on his return to Zagreb, he will attend a delivery of two large and four smaller containers at the Lekenik Civil Protection base, which are a donation from the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia in Zagreb.

According to the Serbian National Council, this visit is a continuation of the help that the Serbian Orthodox Church has been persistently and selflessly sending to the residents of Banija since the first day after the earthquake, directed from the Metropolitanate of Zagreb-Ljubljana, which was headed by the new Serbian

Patriarch, and in coordination with SNC *Banija is our home*.

— Source: portalnovosti.com / spc.rs

