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Patriarch with children from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia



Address by His Holiness Porfirije, the Serbian Patriarch to children from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia in the Church of St. Sava in Vracar on July 8, 2021.

I am glad that you came to Serbia, that you came to the capital of Serbia, Belgrade, and especially that you came to the heart of the capital, and that is the Cathedral church of Saint Sava. I say that the Cathedral church of Saint Sava is the heart of Belgrade, because we, Orthodox Serbs, could say that the heart of our people is Saint Sava. Why? Because Saint Sava determined the spiritual path and gave spiritual guidance to his compatriots, and that is the Orthodox faith and Orthodox prayer. I am glad that you came from Croatia, from Dalmatia, that you came from Bosnia and Herzegovina, from the Federation, because you live there with your peers who belong to other nations and have different spiritual guidelines, that is. Although many of them pray to God, they pray for nuance differently. Although,

when we talk about prayer, if it is sincere, if the prayer is from the depths of the soul, regardless of the differences that can be recognized in words and manner, it always reaches God and God hears it.

I was in Kosovo recently and I had the opportunity to meet your peers. I asked them if they were praying to God. In a voice, everyone answered that they were praying to God. When I asked them: “When do you pray to God?”, They answered first for their relatives, for their neighbours, and then for all the children who are their neighbours and who do not belong to the same people and pray in a slightly different way. I will tell you about my experience because I have lived in Croatia for a number of years.

I lived in Zagreb as Metropolitan of Zagreb and Ljubljana and I often went to many places in Croatia. So often I visited Dalmatia, the monastery of Krk, Krupa, Dragovic, Ocestovo, Sibenik, Zadar, Skradin, Istria, and saw what you probably feel – that all people are the same and that there is no difference between people, only sometimes we make out of selfishness differences and others out of selfishness make differences. And prayer helps us to get out of ourselves and meet God and other people. In other words – to overcome selfishness in ourselves. Although I am completely sure that you are praying for all your peers, for all the children who live with you and around you, but also for all the children of the world, I am additionally asking you and praying to God that you pray even more to recognize friends in each other, to recognize the truth and the fact that no one can do without the other, and that being different is a blessing and a gift from God. It is actually an opportunity to recognize each other in diversity and to enrich each other in diversity.

You are a minority there and it is important that you pray to God for others, for those who are the majority – as it is important here in Serbia that we who are the majority pray for those who are a minority – that we pray to God that they know they are ours as dear and close as anyone else. Let us pray for the children, your peers, let them pray for you and you for them. And if we pray for each other, then we will see that the things we sometimes disagree about are the little things and the biggest nonsense and that it is actually much more important to recognize how valuable everyone is just because they are unique, special and different. We say that here, in the Cathedral church of Saint Sava, because Saint Sava is someone who, almost from your age, has distinguished himself to serve God and to dedicate himself to God. And God made him holy, which means that he is ours, Serbian and Orthodox, but as a saint, he transcends the borders of one nation and as such, as a saint, belongs to all people. He was, as they usually say today, a universal man. He

belonged to all people, because the prayer he addressed to God, but also what he specifically did, was always for the benefit and good of all people.

I greet you once again. I know that the Church is ours even where you live and that it is always open for you through your priests and bishops. The Church is always ready to be with you in every good deed, in every virtue, in everything that is honest and right and for the benefit of all. The Church wants to help you, to support you. Here, I encourage you that if you have any kind of need, and you cannot solve it elsewhere, turn to your priests, all the way to your Bishop, and, here, to the Patriarch. We will always be ready to rejoice together with you, to share everything that is beautiful with you, but also if we come across something that is a problem, to also share it with you, to participate with you so that the problem is what it is possibly smaller.

I don’t know if any of you finished the eighth grade. We also have a high school in Zagreb, the Serbian Orthodox high school Katarina Kantakuzina. First of all, I say this to the children from Dalmatia. I lived in that Gymnasium and I still take care of it. Many children from Dalmatia enroll in that school. The church is ready to help you in that sense as well. The Serbian humanitarian association Privrednik in Zagreb awards scholarships to young people who attend high school or college. You will also have the great support of the state of Serbia, which first of all feels the need, obligation and duty to help its people wherever they are. You are always welcome here, and we will come to your region, to the Federation, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dalmatia and all other parts of Croatia, and may God often be here just under the arches of this beautiful temple dedicated to St. Sava. . May God bless you all.

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Не знам да ли је неко од вас завршио осми разред, У Загребу имамо и

Гимназију, Српску православну гимназију Катарина Кантакузина. Пре свега ово говорим деци из Далмације. Ја сам становао у тој Гимназији и још увек водим бригу о њој. Доста деце из Далмације се уписује у ту школу. Црква је и у том смислу спремна да вам помогне. Српско хуманитарно друштво Привредник у Загребу додељује стипендије младима који похађају средњу школу или факултет. Имаћете и велику подршку државе Србије која најпре осећа потребу, обавезу и дужност да помогне свој народ где год се налазио. Увек сте овде добродошли, а и ми ћемо долазити у ваше крајеве, у Федерацију, Босну и Херцеговину, у Далмацију и све друге крајеве Хрватске, а да Бог да да се и овде често налазимо управо под сводовима овог предивног храма који је посвећен Светом Сави. Нека вас све Господ благослови.

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