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# BULGARIAN MONASTERY OPENS HOME FOR ELDERLY PRIESTS



Bulgaria’s first home for elderly priests and the socially disadvantaged will soon open its doors next to one of the nation’s most important monasteries.

Everyone is working hard to open the home next to Holy Dormition-Bachkovo Monastery by the end of the year, noted the monastery abbot His Grace Bishop Zion of Velichka, reports BNT News.

Until the 1960s, the building was a social house. Now it’s being restored with funds provided by the state and private donors. The home is open to elderly priests, people who have served in the Church, and people who have no one to care for them in their old age and who have the recommendation of their priest, Bp. Zion explained.

Initially, the home will accommodate about 30 people, but there are plans to expand its capacity in the future. Doctors from the local hospital will provide medical care and caregivers will take care of people with reduced mobility.

The people who live in the home will participate in the life of the monastery according to their abilities, and the home will provide them with means of staying active, including taking care of the common garden.

Additionally, “Many older people like to make something with their hands, and we plan to offer these products to worshipers at a Christmas or New Year’s Eve bazaar, so the people can have a sense of satisfaction,” Bp. Zion said.

There are already people who have expressed an interest in moving into the home, which should be possible by New Year’s.

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church also opened a new rehabilitation and integration center in the village of Gorna Malina in May.

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Bachkovo Monastery, located 20 miles from Plovdiv, on the right bank of the Chepelare River, is the second largest and second-most visited monastery in the country. It was founded in 1083 by Prince Gregory Pakourianos and is known for its combination of Byzantine, Georgian, and Bulgarian culture.

It is also home to a wonderworking icon of the Mother of God.

The monastery was awarded the title of “Monastery of the Decade” in March as part of a campaign for the preservation and promotion of the national cultural and historical heritage.
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