

## **Patriarch Porfirije: Let us protect the heritage of the Serbian Orthodox Church on Kosovo and Metohija**



In a conversation with media representatives after visiting the monastery of Visoki Dečani, His Holiness Serbian Patriarch kyr Porfirije said:

These are our shrines. They belong to the Serbian Orthodox Church. Dečani, the Patriarchate of Peć, Gračanica, the Most Holy Theotokos of Ljeviš and again all other shrines on Kosovo and Metohija, are the heritage of the Serbian Orthodox Church. However, everything that is spiritual, if it is authentically spiritual, is never limited to one person or one nation. Exactly because it is spiritual, even though it is ours, it transcends by both its significance and beauty the borders in which we exist and to which we belong, and these are the shrines that are the cultural heritage of the whole world. Therefore we should not be surprised that all the listed shrines are under the protection of UNESCO. That is why all of us should make an effort – as monks do it, as the Church does it, but also all other factors both locally and wider, but also globally – to protect these shrines as cultural heritage from the 14th century, which is the most sublime and beautiful thing that the human race could have given in these shrines. All well-intentioned factors should make an effort not only to safeguard and preserve these shrines but also to keep the significance they have had throughout history; significance for us, for they are our Serbian Orthodox heritage, but also for all other people.



I rejoice once again to be on Kosovo and Metohija together with the brethren members of the Holy Synod of Bishops. These days we had a meeting of the Synod in the Patriarchate of Peć and, thank God, we came here to visit Dečani, the monastery where my Humbleness and Bishop David who is here with us, as well as many other Hierarchs of our Church, began their monastic life, i. e. we became monks here in Dečani. Therefore monastery of Dečani has its reach to the end of the universe and the Kingdom of Heaven, through the prayers and deeds of monks, but also visibly through the people who started their monastic life here and are scattered all over the globe. Christ is risen!

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