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RELICS OF STS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS FESTIVELY GREETED IN SOFIA FOR THE FIRST TIME (+VIDEO)



For the first time in Bulgaria, the holy relics of the Equal-to-the-Apostles and Enlighteners of the Slavs Sts. Cyril and Methodius were joyously greeted by clergy and faithful in the center of Sofia yesterday.

They were then carried in procession to the Metropolitan Sveta Nedelya Cathedral, reports the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.



The great event coincided with the eve of the popular Bulgarian holiday, the Day of the Slavonic Alphabet and Bulgarian Enlightenment and Culture, which honors the inheritance of Sts. Cyril and Methodius.

The procession was led by His Grace Bishop Polycarp of Belogradchik, Vicar to His Holiness Patriarch Neofit, who was released from a two-week stay in the hospital yesterday. Among the honored guests participating in the holy march was Archimandrite Bartholomew, the abbot of the Athonite Monastery of New Esphigmenou, who brought the relics for the veneration of the faithful.



The relics were festively greeted at the cathedral, where Bp. Polycarp served a moleben for the health and prosperity of the Bulgarian people, and read out a message from Pat. Neofit for the occasion.

“On this feast, our holy Orthodox Church and our whole society together pay tribute to all who dedicate their lives, strength and talents to continue the work of the Holy Apostles and all the giants of the Bulgarian Christian spirit, forged in ancient times, the foundations of our high Orthodox spirituality and culture,” the Patriarch’s message reads.

Bulgarian President Rumen Radev then spoke, emphasizing that this is the first the time relics from Esphigmenou have been carried to a Slavic state. “This is a major recognition of the great contribution and inseparable connection of Bulgaria, our people with the holy work of Cyril and Methodius,” the head of state said.

Then a long line of Orthodox faithful waited to venerate the precious relics.

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For centuries, the relics of the missionary brothers were preserved in the Vatican. In the 1980s, Pope John Paul II donated them to the church consecrated to them in Thessaloniki. Some parts remained there, while others were donated to New Esphigmenou Monastery.

The reliquary contains the hand of St. Cyril, two fragments of the ribs of St. Methodius, and a small part of the Life-Giving Cross of the Lord.

The relics will remain in Sofia until tomorrow.

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