

St. Paraskeva's garments donated to Bulgarian city which kept her relics were for 150+ years: Gratitude for Romania's gift



A set of St. Paraskeva's garments, donated by the Metropolitan Cathedral of Iași, Romania, reached on Sunday the Cathedral of Veliko Tarnovo, the city where the saint's relics were once kept for more than 150 years.

His Eminence Metropolitan Grigorie of Veliko Tarnovo of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church welcomed the Romanian delegation with national honours.

"It has been some time since we built a church dedicated to the Holy Venerable Paraskeva, and now, through the blessing of His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel, we have received as a gift a garment of the saint that will permanently remain in our cathedral," said Met. Grigorie.

"We thank His Beatitude for this priceless gift and we're grateful to the Romanian Orthodox Church for keeping the holy relics and for welcoming us with joy when we come on pilgrimage," he added.

The ceremony of handing over the relics-garments began with the changing of the flags of the two nations, and continued with a Te Deum service.

"This event has been awaited by the residents of Veliko Tarnovo for years. Saint Paraskeva is honoured as the patroness and benefactor of the city, not only by the inhabitants of the city, but by the entire Bulgarian people", said Daniel Panov, Mayor of Veliko Tarnovo.

The garments left Iași, stopped for a few days in Brașov, Romania, then left for Bulgaria with a delegation of the Federation of Carriers and Public Services of Romania.

The event was blessed by His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, and His Beatitude Neophyte, Patriarch of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, as well as by metropolitans Teofan of Moldova and Bukovina, Naum of

Ruse, Laurențiu of Transylvania and Gregory of Veliko Tarnovo.

Five times a year, the garments adorning St Paraskeva's relics are changed, and the old set is donated to a church that has requested them. There is a long list of churches that have made a request, and this time, it was the cathedral in Veliko Tarnovo's turn.

St. Paraskeva is one of the most beloved saints in the Balkans. Her relics were gifted by a former Patriarch of Constantinople to the Prince of Moldavia in 1641, as a token of gratitude for helping the Constantinople Church to pay its debts to the sultan.

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