

THE WAY + ЈЕДИНИ ПУТ

NOVEMBER 2015 BULLETIN

ST. SAVA SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

P.O. Box 2366
14916 239TH PLACE SE
ISSAQUAH, WA 98027
REV. PREDRAG BOJOVIC
MOBILE PHONE: 224/388-2605



PLEASE FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AT: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/183123188467419/>

+++++



ИНТЕРВЈУ архимандрит Сава Јањић, игуман Високих Дечана Косово се брани и трпљењем

Игуман Високих Дечана, једног од најзначајнијих српских манастира, говори за Политику о пријему Косова у Унеско, заштити светиње и вери која их одржава и чува.

Када у истом дану, на капији или око манастира Дечани, сретнете војника Кфора с пушком у руци, а потом се чујете или сретнете с неким страним дипломатом који вам каже да Косово треба да уђе у Унеско, како се осећате?

Чињеница да су наше светиње под посебним режимом заштите и на листи угрожених светских споменика културе суштински је у раскораку са евентуалним статусом Косова у Унеску. Наравно, нама је заштита КФОР-а који штити наш манастир неопходна јер смо, иако „под заштитом

Унеска, неколико пута нападани гранатама последњих година. Мишљење неких који сматрају да ће Косово бити одговорније према заштити наших светиња ако уђе у Унеско суштински је постављено на погрешним премисама. Наравно, на Косову и Метохији има много Албанаца који те светиње не би нападали и уништавали, али нисам до сада упознао оне који су спремни да искрено признају да су то српске светиње, иако то добро знају. Овде је у питању озбиљан проблем њиховог схватања идентитета. Ако се идентитет гради на негирању другог, неизбежно се долази у ситуацију коју смо видели у погрому 2004. када су не појединци, већ 50.000 већином младих Албанаца уништавали хришћанску баштину наше цркве, а истовремено говорили да су цркве њихове. Зато се албански представници свим силама труде да покажу да су део Европе и да Албанци никада нису уништавали цркве, а посвуда видимо рушевине храмова, раскопане гробове и поломљене крстове. На Косову и Метохији након рата се наставило са рушењем српских богомоља и уништавањем гробаља, и то најалост и поред међународног присуства. Ово најбоље показује какве моралне и цивилизационе препоруке Косово има за Унеско, а ко је спреман да чује – схватиће.

Како и зашто је део међународне заједнице доспео у шизофрену косовску ситуацију у којој очигледне вредности предаје онима који су их уништавали? Је ли то страх, инерција, незнање, одсуство бриге за угрожене, светски интерес...

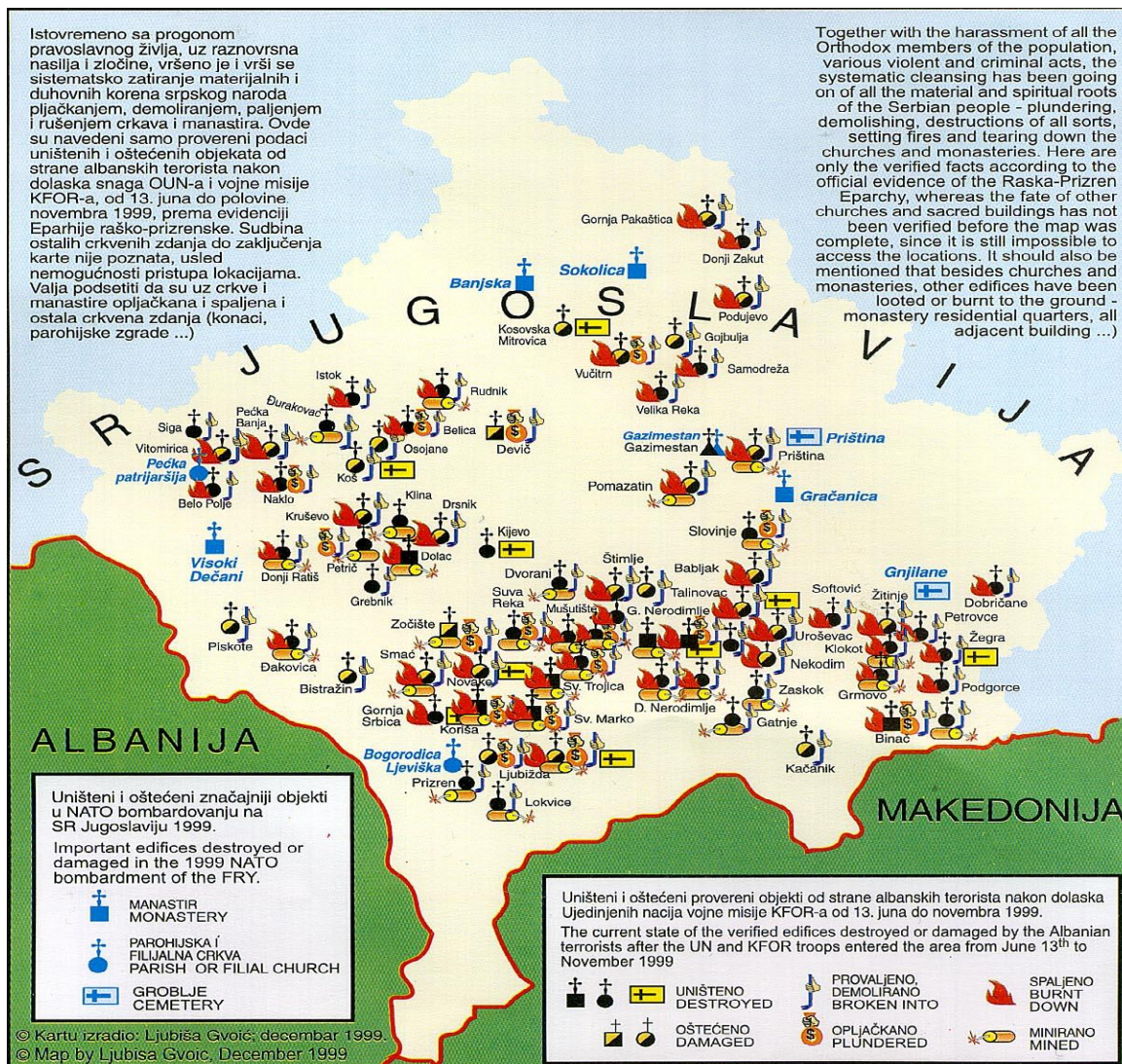
Мислим да подршка тих земаља уласку Косова у Унеско нема никакве везе са културом, већ је реч о намиривању одређених политичких интереса, пошто је Косово морало да прихвати Суд за ратне злочине и Заједницу српских општина, иако, како видимо сваког дана, све се чини да се то опструира коришћењем сузавца, што је опет незабележено ни у једном демократском друштву. Некада је албански народ имао бесу, а сада се не поштују чак ни договори направљени у међународном присуству. С међународне стране имамо један политички прагматизам, јер Косово клизи све више у екстремизам и верски фундаментализам, што показују и њихови и косовски извештаји. Ипак, потпуно је неправедно да у свему томе наше светиње и духовна баштина постану колатерална штета. Зато стално помињемо да питање институционалне заштите наших светиња мора да буде регулисано дугорочно у Бриселском дијалогу. А на међународној заједници јесте да види како да се ти споразуми спроведу у стварности.

Да вам је неко 19. марта 2004. рекао даће администрација у Приштини задванаест година бити на вратима пријема у организацију која је симбол заштите, чувања и вредновања светске културне баштине – како бисте реаговали?

Од 2004. године мене ништа више не може на зачуди. Јавна је тајна да су ти нереди били и организовани или барем прећутно подржани од оних у косовским институцијама који нам сада великодушно обећавају заштиту и помоћ. Лицемерје је увек било део локалне политичке (не)културе овог простора, само је жалосно да отворене лажи и пропаганда коју шири косовска влада, користећи сваку прилику да минимизује послератно уништавање хришћанских српских светиња, може још увек да прође у свету. Много тога смо прошли у историји, али важно је да изнесемо и свој став. Увек ће бити оних који ће, ако барем ништа друго, чути други глас и видети поново слике које су заборавили или неће да виде, а које ми често виђамо тамо где наше светиње и гробља још леже у рушевинама.

Да ли је ово само политика? Зашто су светиње толико Косова и Метохије важне за наш народ?

Данас је политика у свим сегментима живота. И наше право да кажемо истину неки називају политиком, иако ми нисмо ничији гласноговорници, већ сведочимо реалност у којој живимо не само последњих 15 година, већ и много дуже. Унеско би евентуалним пријемом Косова показао да је коначно постао једна политичка филијала разних центара моћи који се преко наших глава сукобљавају, што може да води губитку било каквог кредибилитета те организације ако попусти под тим притисцима. За једне је питање Унеска и Косова само политичко питање, али за нас је то питање нашег живота и наших светиња које нама нису само неки споменици културе, већ жива места богослужења, монашког живота, простор у коме се сваког дана сусрећемо са Господом и где вековима сведочимо веру у њега. Тако је и са Косовом. Оно неоспорно има и политички и географски значај, али Косово је за нас више од географије и политике. То је симбол наше вере у Христа, а не обезбоженог национализма који нас је и довео у ову ситуацију. Наше светиње су светионици у магли нашег вишегодишњег лутања, који нас подсећају шта смо били, шта јесмо и шта треба да будемо, ако не желимо да завршимо на маргинама историје. Зато се Косово пре свега брани истином, љубављу, добротом и трпљењем. У противном можемо да постанемо исти као они који од Косова праве нешто друго и што је нама страно.



Да ли су се држава и црква прекасно укључиле у борбу да Косово не уђе у Унеско?

Ми се не трудимо само да покажемо да Косово не треба да буде чланица Унеска, јер ми који овде живимо сваког дана сведочимо ову стварност страдања нашег народа и светиња већ годинама у свим нашим разговорима са међународним представницима. За нас то није политичка кампања у коју треба да се укључујемо, већ сведочење наше живе вере коју пре свега сведочимо вером, нашим литургијским окупљањима у храмовима и на рушевинама оних светиња које су уништене и још леже у рушевинама као Богородичина црква у Муштутишту или манастир Свете Тројице. Држава чини своје и знам да има доста преданих људи који се труде да пренесу ову нашу косовску реалност свету. Можда једино у медијима није било више говора о томе, али колико ја знам активности на томе да се укаже на штетност и опасност уласка Косова у Унеско, посебно без јасног механизма заштите наших светиња, одавно је тема бројних разговора.

Ваш глас се пажљиво слуша и на њега се чекало, безмало до последњег тренутка. Да ли се плашите за судбину свога братства и свога манастира?

Да се плашимо не бисмо остали у манастиру који је већ четири пута у последњих 15 година био под гранатама албанских екстремиста. Не би сестре у Девичу живеље у светињи која је два пута спаљена од стране њихових комшија. Хришћанин треба да живи у нади и вери у Бога без обзира

каква је ситуација, јер наш оптимизам не извире из политичких околности, већ из вере у Бога који је постао човек, био распет и васкрсао. Многима је то апсурд, али то је наша философија живота која је овај народ и одржала током пет векова османске окупације. Данашња „отрежњујућа размишљања” појединих интелектуалаца долазе из исте оне идеолошке школе која је од краја Другог светског рата систематски радила на обезбожењу нашег народа. Зар из тих редова нису и произашли они чије рачуне овај народ већ годинама скупо плаћа.

Хоће ли бити репресалија ако Косово на Генералној скупштини ипак не буде примљено у Унеско? Одузимање земље, административна пресија, однос према гето заједницама, даља опструкција повратка?

На Косову се никада ништа не може предвидети. Нама није циљ да икога провоцирамо и сматрамо да као што косовски Албанци имају право да износе своје ставове, имамо и ми. За нас ово није утакмица Србија–Албанија, већ део једног вишевековног сведочења које ће се наставити без обзира на гласање у Генералној скупштини или неком другом политичком форуму. Ми немамо где, осим да опстојимо овде где смо сада. Нико нас на то не присиљава, јер смо дошли из разних крајева да служимо Богу борећи се једино молитвом и истином, а Господ је једном рекао „истина ће вас ослободити”. А знамо да је Божија увек последња.

**LETTER OF THE HOLY SYNOD OF BISHOPS
OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
TO MRS. IRINA BOKOVA
Director-General of UNESCO**

**HOLY SYNOD OF BISHOPS
SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

No 1047

14 September 2015

Belgrade

Dear Madame,

On the occasion of recent self-proclaimed Government of Kosovo bid for UNESCO membership we would wish to express our profound concern on behalf of the Serbian Orthodox Church. We are convinced that an eventual acceptance of this request would have far-reaching consequences for the Christian cultural heritage itself as well as the perspective of common life of Serbs, Albanians and others in Kosovo and Metohija in the future.

It is well known that all four World Cultural Heritage Sites of UNESCO in Kosovo and Metohija (inscribed as “Medieval monasteries in Kosovo”) are holy sites of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Conjointly, the same can rightfully be said for almost all the Christian cultural heritage on that territory, from the fourth century and especially from the medieval ages until today. In that regard our silence on this issue might be misinterpreted as our tacit approval of this motion by Kosovo authorities. Consequently, we would like to focus primarily on arguments that are of vital importance for the future of our holy sites in Kosovo and

Metohija, and particularly for the preservation of our cultural and religious identity as well as protection of our human rights and civil liberties.

As you are aware, since the end of the civil war in Kosovo and Metohija in June 1999 and deployment of the NATO led international peacekeeping forces (KFOR) together with the UN Mission and Police, 107 Orthodox Christian Sites in Kosovo have been either completely destroyed or damaged[1]. The destruction of our heritage, let us note, happened not in time of war but in peace which was guaranteed by the UN Security Council Resolution 1244. The devastation of the Serbian Christian Orthodox heritage in the post-war period is unprecedented in recent European history. It had a systematic character as dozens of our holy sites were destroyed in a similar pattern, often by explosives and in a way that strongly suggests premediated intention and strategy. On many of our ruined sites the acronyms of the so called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) still can be seen. Together with other post-war crimes in which hundreds of Serbs and other civilians suffered or were abducted, the destruction of our heritage has never been properly investigated nor has anyone ever been brought to justice for this and other post-war crimes, which seriously undermines our confidence in Kosovo institutions.

After the first post-war wave of destruction of our heritage, the massive Kosovo Albanian riots in March 2004 left in ruins an additional 34 Serbian Orthodox sites. One of the seriously damaged sites was the 14th century Cathedral of Bogorodica Ljeviška in Prizren (a UNESCO World Heritage site). Thanks to the Council of Europe led effort to reconstruct the sites damaged in 2004 some of the damage has been repaired, but regrettably none on sites destroyed between June 1999 and 2004. It is also important to mention that another site under UNESCO protection in Kosovo, the 14th century Monastery of Visoki Dečani suffered four armed attacks since the end of the civil war in 1999 (two mortar attacks in 2000, one more mortar attack in 2004 riots and a RPG attack in 2007) which makes it the most frequently attacked Christian site in Kosovo and Metohija. Only the latest of these attacks was investigated and a Kosovo Albanian male was sentenced to 2.5 years of prison. We can say that it is only thanks to the efforts by KFOR that Dečani Monastery, the neighboring Peć Patriarchate and Gračanica Monasteries (all three UNESCO sites) were not destroyed by Kosovo Albanian terrorists. We are still haunted by the video footage of destruction of St. Andrew's church in Podujevo with young Kosovo Albanians climbing the walls, breaking crosses, throwing them among the cheering crowd chanting „Kosovo Liberation Army“ slogans and ultimately burning the church, which so painfully reminds us of the current violence against religious sites in Iraq and Syria, particularly the destruction of the Baalshamin temple on the grounds of the ancient Syrian city of Palmyra.

These persistent attacks, behind which we can see a clear intention to obliterate the Serbian heritage in Kosovo and Metohija, and with this the overall Christian heritage from the 4th century AD until today, were the most important reason to include our UNESCO sites in Kosovo in the list of the World Heritage in Danger. At the same time there appeared international initiatives to institutionally protect our heritage in Kosovo from destruction, which ultimately led to Annex V of the Ahtisaari Plan in 2008.

It is very sad and disappointing that even after 2004 riots very few perpetrators have been identified and brought to justice[2]. Although all international political figures publicly condemned the violence and called it „organized“, no Kosovo political and local leaders have ever been under any investigation. To our great surprise the political leaders of that time with controversial war-time past are still among the leading political personalities in Kosovo today. The Council of Europe (CoE) led process of reconstruction of the part of our heritage in which Kosovo provisional institutions participated would have never happened without a strong international insistence that the damage had to be repaired. We find it unfortunate that in their lobbying for UNESCO membership Kosovo authorities focus mainly on war time damage on Islamic heritage, minimizing and almost completely ignoring the damage which was inflicted on Christian Orthodox heritage during and after the war. Statements by Kosovo leaders have often been ambiguous and politically colored on this issue, which could easily be interpreted by extremists as a *carte blanche* for attacks on Serbian churches in the atmosphere of alleged Serbian collective guilt which is spread even today by Kosovo media. In many publications on cultural heritage as a rule Islamic sites are mentioned first although all four UNESCO protected sites are of the Serbian Orthodox Church. For years in Dečani, Peć and Prizren we have been struggling to provide adequate signs for the UNESCO sites as many tourists cannot easily find them. Very often we had to reprimand Kosovo Albanian tour guides because they present our holy sites as Albanian churches occupied by Serbs. Current Kosovo laws do not regulate the presentation of our sites and leave space for ill-intended political speculations.

It would be unfair not to mention the systematic post-war destruction of at least 392 Serbian Orthodox cemeteries in Kosovo and Metohija (which have been documented by OSCE) and a deplorable condition in which they still are found.[3] Persecution and uprooting of the living people has often been accompanied in history with desecration of tombs of the dead, and consequently by obliterating the memory of those who had been living there for centuries creating works of their culture. To make the situation more tragic, all this represents a prolongation of five centuries of Ottoman occupation (until 1912), and of the fascist persecution and atrocities from the Second World War period. We strongly believe that the systematic destruction of our heritage and cemeteries in the areas from which only in the recent time several hundreds of thousands of Serb civilians fled demonstrates a concerted effort by local extremists, organized crime groups and other radical Kosovo Albanian elements to prevent the return of Serbian refugees and permanently change the demographic and cultural landscape of the larger part of Kosovo and Metohija, which had already been largely changed throughout the centuries due to living in enslavement and under violence. We feel obliged to draw your attention to the fact that what is currently happening in the Middle East, particularly in the territories controlled by the so called Islamic State (ISIS)—massive persecution of the people and destruction of cultural heritage— represents in many ways the continuation of what happened in Kosovo and Metohija, particularly from 1981 until today. The fact that the most important Serbian Orthodox sites are still under armed police protection and the Monastery of Dečani is still protected by KFOR soldiers, particularly after last year's Islamist graffiti, offers clear evidence that the Serbian Orthodox heritage in Kosovo and Metohija is still at serious danger, exclusively

from Kosovo Albanian extremists who find inspiration in the „ideals“ of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army and today, regrettably, more often in fanaticism of radical Islam.

As the Ahtisaari Plan was politically conditioned on the Serbian recognition of the self-proclaimed independence of Kosovo, the guarantees for the protection of Serbian Orthodox heritage, after the failure in its implementation, have in the meantime been mostly lost or have only been partially transferred into Kosovo laws. The most recent attempt in the Kosovo Parliament to pass a very problematic draft law on Cultural Heritage, that additionally abrogates that what is left of Ahtisaari's provisions, leaves even less space for confidence in Kosovo institutions. The draft law is suggesting the introduction of direct state control over the sites of the Serbian Orthodox Church and is characterizing our heritage as “property of the Republic of Kosovo”. It was only thanks to the strong EU and US efforts that the draft law was withdrawn but it is only a question of time when Kosovo Government may send it to Parliament discussion again. Some Kosovo Ministers, including the one of Culture, are still reluctant to call the Serbian Orthodox Church by its official name, while some leading cultural institutions like Kosovo Academy of Science and Arts publish books in which the rich Serbian contribution to the history of Kosovo is vastly ignored. Young Kosovo Albanians often learn in schools that medieval Serbian Orthodox Monasteries are in fact Albanian—or even Illyrian (sic!)—and that they have been occupied by force by Serbs. Such an atmosphere in the cultural life of Kosovo does not demonstrate maturity and responsibility for the protection that the Kosovo Government should nominally pledge in the course of their UNESCO bid. At the 2005 UNESCO Donors' Conference in Paris the then Kosovo Minister of Culture distributed a pamphlet calling Serbian Orthodox Monasteries Albanian monuments. The pamphlet was immediately withdrawn by the intervention of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General.

At the same time, we are deeply disappointed that the Kosovo legal system does not offer adequate protection of the property rights of our Church. Instead of passing a law on restitution of the Church and other private property in Kosovo and Metohija, which were confiscated during the Communist rule, today we can see that the remaining property of the Church is being taken away or endangered, particularly the property of those Serbs who fled the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and Metohija. The most recent demonstration of this is the issue of the Dečani Monastery land (affecting 50% of its current property) which has been the subject of a court procedure for 15 years, and of those the last 8 years in the Supreme Court of Kosovo. After a decision of the Court in 2012 confirming the Monastery's ownership and an appeal process in which no new substantial arguments were presented, our Church expected this issue to be finally adjudicated and the Monastery rights fully protected. However, the Appellate Panel of the Kosovo Supreme Court proclaimed, inducing general dismay, that it lacked jurisdiction to adjudicate the case although the previous Supreme Court panel with the international chairperson several times confirmed its jurisdiction in the case and even reached the final decision. Having in mind that the most recent decision was reached by majority voting with strong opposition of the two (presumably international) dissenting judges out of five panel members, this decision is seen by our Church, as well as relevant international factors in Kosovo, as biased, flawed and contrary to European legal principles. For

our Church this is not only a matter of a failing judiciary but also portrays a discouraging picture of the position of the Kosovo institutions toward vital interests of our Church and our people, particularly in situations in which decisions are made without international supervision. In case that this injustice prevails our most important Monastery and a UNESCO protected site will be deprived of 50% of its property and left without economic sustainability. Such injustices we could see in the time of the Communist rule in Yugoslavia when religious institutions were deprived of their property without any justice and compensation.

These facts are easily verifiable and well known to the international representatives in Kosovo and Metohija who share our concerns. All of this leads us to the conclusion that the admission of Kosovo to UNESCO, particularly in circumstances where institutional protection of Serbian Christian heritage in Kosovo is not adequately safeguarded, would not only be an unwise and hasty decision, but could pave way towards cultural repression and the long-term loss of Christian spiritual and cultural identity. Having in mind all these facts the following important issues must be resolved.

- The institutional protection of Serbian Orthodox Heritage in Kosovo and Metohija, with its property, name and historical tradition, must be effectively defined and safeguarded against attempts to rewrite history and deprive our Church and our people of their sustainable future. Strong written international guarantees, including the rehabilitation of content of Ahtisaari's Annex V, are needed to prevent the possibility of changing the local legislation in future and passing new discriminatory laws. In this respect we find particularly important the name under which our monuments are inscribed on the World Heritage List because it currently does not clearly reflect their historical and religious identity and leaves space for political and media manipulations. We adamantly believe that the issue of the Serbian Orthodox Heritage in Kosovo must be included in the Brussels dialogue between Belgrade and Priština due to its utmost sensitivity for the interethnic relations and the multiethnic future of Kosovo and Metohija.
- For centuries our Church has taken care of the protection of her property and Christian heritage in Kosovo and Metohija and it is incomprehensible for us that Kosovo institutions could unilaterally undertake any intervention including reconstruction and conservation works. Works on our property without our full agreement and supervision as envisaged by the Ahtisaari Annex V would be completely unacceptable. Our Monasteries and churches are not only the property of the Serbian Orthodox Church but also constitute the most important monuments of the European cultural heritage, which requests a clearly defined manner of presentation, expertise and technical preservation, which is not satisfactorily defined by Kosovo legislation.
- Recently there appeared a support of Kosovo "religious communities" to Mr. Thaci's request for admission of Kosovo to UNESCO. Actually behind this support stands the Albanian Islamic religious community. The signatory of the Catholic Church is not its authorized person and the minuscule Jewish community has, as far as we are aware, no cultural heritage in Kosovo.

We are deeply convinced that in the current circumstances and with the existing legal provisions, the admission of Kosovo to UNESCO, in particular any thought of entrusting the care of our most important religious sites to Kosovo institutions, could be a dangerous element of instability which could seriously jeopardize the future of Kosovo and Metohija, its overall Christian heritage, as well as fundamental religious and civil rights. If the UNESCO status granted to our sites was not only an act of recognition of their cultural and civilizational value for humanity, but also an additional mechanism of protection in the current security situation, the World Cultural Heritage status by itself, in case Kosovo becomes a member of UNESCO, might become more of a problem than an element of long-term protection and a guarantee of that future.

With hope that you will pay due attention to our concerns, we remain deeply grateful.

President of the Holy Synod of Bishops
Archbishop of Peć
Metropolitan of Belgrade-Karlovci and
Serbian Patriarch **IRINEJ**





СРПСКА ПРАВОСЛАВНА ЦРКВА "СВЕТИ САВА" ПРЕДСТАВЉА

"SAINT SAVA" SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH PRESENTS

Традиционална
Српска Вечера
Жива Музика
Аукција

**Јесења
Забава**

Traditional
Serbian Cuisine
Live Music
Auction

**Fund Raising Fall Dance
Seattle**

November 14, 2015 6:00PM



Tickets are \$35 for adults and \$15 for children under 12. Admission is free for children younger than 6.

**Location: St. Demetrios Church
2100 Boyer Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98112**

Dinner Tickets: \$35.00

**For reservation call or e-mail:
(425) 338-0430
mmsst53@gmail.com**

Children 12 and under:

Limited Number of Seats Available.

BECOME A STEWARD OF OUR PARISH ! БУДИТЕ СТАРАТЕЉ НАШЕ ПАРОХИЈЕ!



STEWARDSHIP 2015

14916 239th PL. SE, ISSAQUAH, WA 98027



"A RICH MAN IS NOT
ONE WHO HAS MUCH...

...BUT ONE
WHO GIVES MUCH
FOR WHAT HE GIVES AWAY
REMAINS HIS FOREVER."

SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

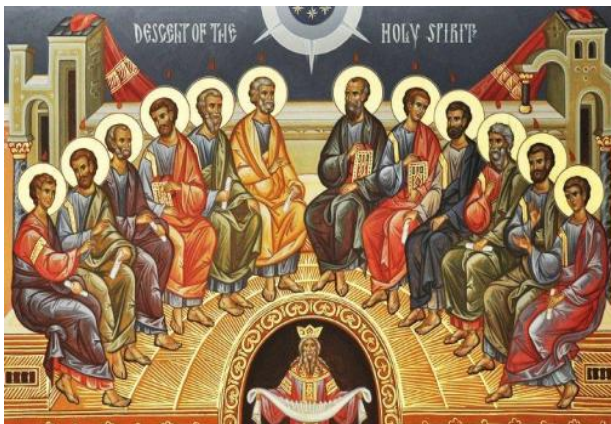
ST. SAVA SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
P.O. Box 2366
ISSAQUAH, WA 98027

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT NO. 1703

NOVEMBER 2015

MONTHLY BULLETIN



*“For where two or three have gathered together in my name,
I am there in their midst.” Matthew 18:20*

*“Где су два или три сабрана у моје име
Тамо сам и ја међу њима.” Матеј 18:20*