



LEGACY OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ON THE BALKANS WITH THE BLESSING OF ARCHBISHOP PETER OF CHICAGO *DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE, SEPTEMBER 23 – OCTOBER 5, 2024*

Day 1. Monday, September 23, 2024

On arrival in **Podgorica**, Montenegro you will be transferred by coach to the hotel. Our guide will host a welcome dinner near the majestic Old Town, with a beautiful view of the sea and harbor. Overnight.

Day 2. Tuesday, September 24, 2024

There is one word to describe the **Boka Kotorska** (the Bay of Kotor) – unmissable! Discover the Old Town of **Kotor**, a perfect destination for history lovers, with stunning





medieval architecture and an unmatched atmospheric charm. The first records from this town date to the 1st century AD. Enjoy its asymmetrical squares, dozens of historic churches and the ramparts that were one of the reasons for the inclusion of Kotor on the World's Heritage List. Visit the **church of Saint Nicholas**, recognizable by its two towers. Continue the drive to picturesque **Perast**. No tour of the Boka Kotorska would be complete without a scenic **boat ride** to visit the church of **Our Lady of the Rocks** located on a man-made island where, according to the local

legend, in the 15th century, two sailors found the icon of Madonna and Child which kept miraculously returning to the rock.

Day 3. Wednesday, September 25, 2024

We will drive up some steep hills to visit the **Ostrog monastery**, the most important Orthodox sanctuary of Montenegro, built in the 1600s by literally being carved into the face of a cliff. One doesn't have to be a believer to appreciate this true masterpiece of nature and mankind. It is dedicated to Saint Basil of Ostrog and we will be able to venerate his whole and healing body, uncorrupt and wonderworking to the present day. The subtle splendor of the monastery lies in the fact that all three major religions,



Orthodox Christian, Roman Catholic, and Muslim consider this a sacred place. They all believe that bowing down before the holy relics of Saint Basil brings miracles for all who believe and have faith. Next, we will drive to **Podgorica**, the capital of Montenegro and considered one of Europe's greenest cities, located at the confluence of two major rivers. We will visit the **Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ** where we will see magnificent interior murals on the walls and roof.



Day 4. Thursday, September 26, 2024

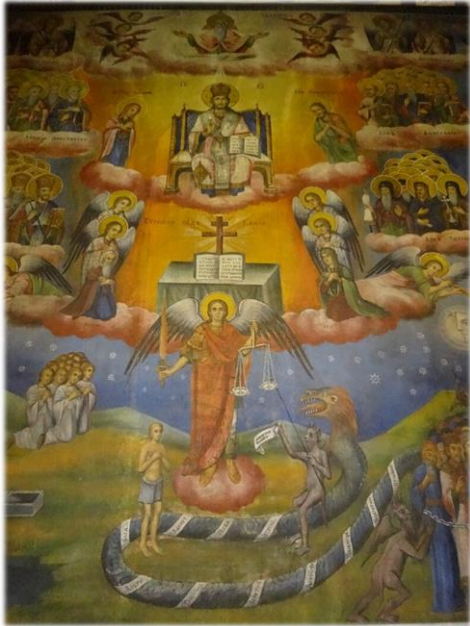
This morning, we will leave Montenegro and cross the border into **Serbia**. Our first stop is Our first stop is at the Moraca Monastery is a Orthodox Monastery located in the valley of the Moraca river near Kolashin. It was founded in 1252 by Stefan Vukanovic of the Nemanjic Dynasty. It is one of the best preserved medieval monuments of Montenegro. Beside the architecture, its frescoes are of special importance; the oldest fresco depicting eleven compositions from the life of the prophet Elias date to the 13th century. The onto another 13th century **Milesheva monastery**, the guardian of medieval frescoes of timeless beauty. The most famous, "**Beli**

Andeo ("White Angel") fresco, one of the finest examples of European medieval art, was sent as a message in the first satellite broadcast signal from Europe to America in 1963. Miliesheva also holds the only remaining **relics of St. Sava**, the patron saint of Serbia. In the monastery we will remain for the **Vigil**, dinner and overnight. Overnight in Miliesheva



Day 5. Friday, September 27, 2024

After the **Festive Liturgy in Miliesheva** the road will lead us



to the **Ovcar-Kablar gorge**, known as the "Serbian Mount Athos", with unforgettable landscapes and monasteries clustered together. Peace and tranquility prevail over 11 monasteries where the **West Morava River** boldly broke through the cliffs and left three unique meanders behind. Get to know the region of **Valjevo** city and the beauties that surround it, together with its spiritual centers – the uniquely shaped **Lelić monastery** and *time permitting* 13th century **monastery Ćelije**. The Lelic Monastery is the endowment of Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic, a world-class scholar, an internationally recognized statesman, prolific writer and gifted spiritual leader. You won't be able to stay unimpressed in front of its Doomsday scene that dominates other biblical events. The Celije monastery is known for its former inhabitant, St. Iustin of Celije, one of the most notable theologians of Orthodoxy. His grave is next to the altar. For dinner and overnight arrive to **Belgrade**, capital of Serbia.

Day 6. Saturday, September 28, 2024

Belgrade is the capital and largest city of Serbia whose history dates back to the 4th century BC. Located at the confluence of the rivers Sava and Danube, it was fought over in 115 wars and it has been destroyed and rebuilt more than 44 times during its history. Meet this city rich with culture, wildly varying architecture, and an easy-going Mediterranean pace. We will visit **Saint Sava Church**, the biggest Orthodox Church within the monumental Balkans, that will leave you speechless. Here you will learn more about the first Serbian Archbishop, his influence, and why he became the most important saint in the Serbian Orthodox Church. Next stop - the **National Museum** with some 5000 sq meters of exhibition space spanning three floors. Visit the **Belgrade fortress** (aka Kalemegdan) founded in the 3rd century; entering from Knez Mihailova and passing through Kalemegdan Park, we'll first reach the Upper Town whose attractions include the Military Museum, Clock Tower, Roman Well and Victor Monument. In the Lower Town, which slopes down towards the river, look out for the



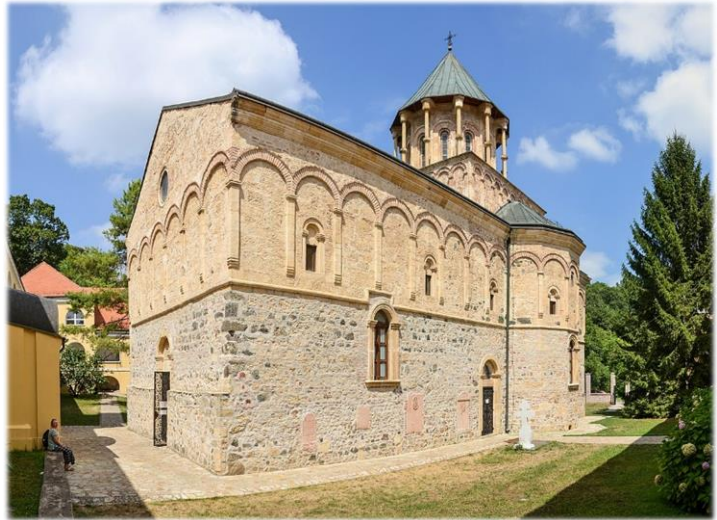


Ružica church (one of the most beautiful Belgrade churches), **Saint Petka Chapel** (with its sacred spring) and **Nebojša Tower**. We'll attend a **Vigil** at one of Belgrade's churches. Overnight.

Day 7. Sunday, September 29, 2024

Start your day with the **Divine Liturgy**. Next we'll visit the **Russian Church**, a place associated with the post-Revolution Russian Community in Belgrade. After lunch, onwards to the neoclassical **Cathedral Church of St.**

Michael The Archangel, following a **boat ride** on the Sava and Danube Rivers. Explore the sights of Belgrade from the water on a 1.5-hour cruise where you will get stellar views of the Belgrade Fortress at the rivers confluence, pass under bridges, see the lush Ada Ciganlija island and the protected wetlands of the Great War Island, known for their rich birdlife. Dinner in the Bohemian quarter Skadarlija with a **folklore show**. Overnight.



Day 8. Monday, September 30, 2024

This day is reserved for exploring the northern part of Serbia – **Vojvodina**. In the morning, we will travel to **Fruška Gora**, the oldest national park in Serbia and the home of 16 Orthodox monasteries. Our first stop is the **Novo Hopovo monastery**, established during the 16th century as one of the most important spiritual and educational seats of the Serbian Church (Saint Theodor Tiron). Drive to **Novi Sad**, the 2nd largest city in Serbia. From the imposing fortress to the churches representing numerous denomination, to the old town's pedestrian zone, Novi Sad has much to boast about! Next, we'll explore **Sremski Karlovci**, a charming town where it feels as though time had stopped in the 18th century. We'll admire the baroque iconostasis in the **Saint Nicholas Cathedral** and will visit the local Seminary associated with Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) and many other important Russian clergymen. Return to **Belgrade** and overnight.



Day 9. Tuesday, October 1, 2024

Right after breakfast, we are heading to Central Serbia. Our first stop is **Žiča Monastery**. Declared a Cultural monument of exceptional importance, Žiča celebrated 800 years of existence a few years ago. The seven rulers of the Serbian Nemanjić lineage were crowned under the seal of Žiča. The remarkable red color of the exterior walls is a symbol of the blood of the martyrs of the early Christian church. Certainly, we won't skip the **Studenica Monastery** either. This UNESCO list site, a real architectural masterpiece from the



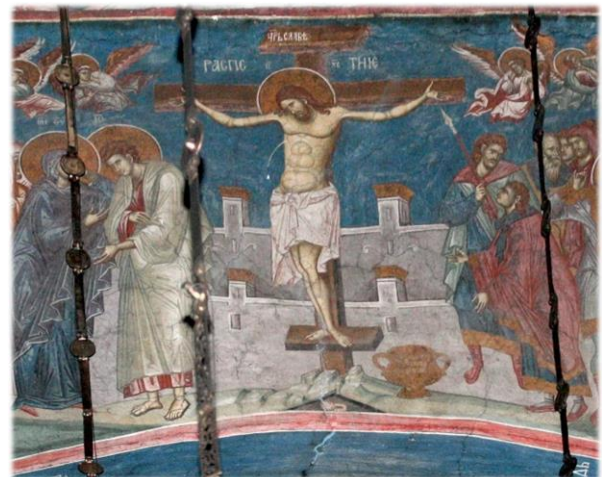
late 12th century, built "to connect Heaven and Earth", is a memorial and sepulchral church to the first Serbian ruler of the Nemanjić Dynasty. As the cradle of literature, spirituality, and arts, Studenica is an institution for all time embedded into the very foundations of Serbian statehood, as well as the cultural



history of Europe. Next, we'll visit the **Miljkov monastery**, built in 14th century, influenced historical and cultural occurrences, while being a strong spiritual and enlightening center where many well-known Serbs studied. In 1926, monastery opens the doors to the Russian emigrants – monks. The pride of the monastery is a Russian wonderworking icon of Saint Mother of God - "Ahtirska" from 1739. Overnight in **Novi Pazar**.

Day 10. Wednesday, October 2, 2024

In the morning, a minibus will take us to the **Crna Reka (Black River) Monastery**, tucked away in the mountains. The monastery is build into a steep stone cliff and located inside a cave. Its greatest treasure is the holy and incorruptible **relics of St. Peter of Korisha**. Afterwards we will proceed to the **Sopoćani Monastery**, a world-class beauty. Built at the very source of the Serbian state in 13th century, this monastery is a treasury of unique **frescoes** and a mausoleum of the royal family. Sopoćani's frescoes, painted in the classic antique style by the most famous artists of Constantinople, are considered to be the greatest painting achievements of that time. We'll visit the archeological site **Pazarište**. Drive to the **Djurdjevi Stupovi Monastery**, one of the royal monasteries from the 13th century. For 300 years it was in ruins, but during the last 40 years the monastery has undergone a complex restoration process. Our last stop is the **Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul**, also known as Peter's Church. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is among the oldest medieval religious properties in Serbia, dating back to the 4th century. Surrounded by an old cemetery in a tranquil setting, it provides an unforgettable experience. Overnight in **Gracanica**.



Day 11. Thursday, October 3, 2024



This we will start our exploration of **Kosovo and Metohija**, with a visit to the **Visoki Decani Monastery**, the undisputed highlight and a real must for any visitor to the area. Dečani possesses a unique church - a mixture of Romanic, Gothic and Byzantine styles, with more than 1000 original frescoes preserved. The monastery is currently under guard from KFOR. After a short drive, we will admire the **Patriarchate of Pec**. You'll get a walk through time in this medieval monastery complex consisting of several small churches, located at the outskirts of the town of Pec, along the Bistrica river. The Pec Patriarchate is the seat

of Serbian Archbishops and Patriarchs. In 2006 it was granted a protected status as part of UNESCO cultural heritage of exceptional importance in danger. Overnight near **Gracanica Monastery**.

Day 12. Friday, October 4, 2024

We will start the day by visiting the **Gracanica Monastery**, one of the pearls of medieval Serbian culture and one of the most significant places in Serbian history and spirituality, built in the second decade of the 14th century as an endowment from the Serbian King Milutin. Gračanica's outstanding architectural exterior with patterned brickwork is matched by its equally valuable frescoes. Inside it is a treasure house of Serbian medieval art, with exquisite wall murals covering the narthex, nave, and domes. Next, we'll visit beautiful **Prizren**. This unique historic town lies on the slopes of Mt. Šara where series of bridges span the cold waters of the Bistrica River. Prizren is the city-museum with the remains of three ancient cities. Its **Bogorodica Ljeviška church** was included on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites List. Overnight near Gracanica Monastery.



Day 13. Saturday, October 5, 2024

Departure from the airport in Prishtina.

Among them UNESCO World Heritage Sites:

The Bay of Kotor

Sopocani

Studenica, Djurdjevi Stupovi

Decani, Gracanica, Lady of Levis (Bogorodica Ljeviška, Prizren), The Patriarchate of Peja (Peć)



PRICING AND INCLUSIONS:

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Price include:

- Accommodations in three and four star hotels along the way
- All breakfasts and 13 extra meals (lunches and dinners)
- Private bus transportation along the way
- Group transfers from and to the airport
- All admissions, according to the schedule
- English speaking guide/escort during the entire tour
- Dinner in Skadarlija with folklore show on 09/19
- Wine and honey tasting in Sremski Karlovci
- Boat ride in Perast on September 24th
- Boat ride in Belgrade on September 29th

- Minibus/Taxi transfers to Ostrog, Ćelije and Crna Reka monasteries

Price does not include:

- Personal health/accident insurance
- Air tickets
- Transportation to and from the airport in if traveling separately from the group
- Private activities: transfers, optional tours, tickets to shows or additional museums.
- Some newly introduced fees that may occur in certain places
- Tips to bus drivers and tour guides (Minimal suggested amount per person is \$3 per day for bus drivers and \$5 for local tour guides. Your generosity will be always greatly appreciated)

- Anything that is not specifically mentioned in "Price includes"

Financial arrangements:

2600USD per person, in double occupancy in a group of 25 participants; Single supplement: 500USD extra. Please factor that the final price may fluctuate due to the actual number of participants, due to significant difference in exchange rate or may increase due to the continuous fluctuation in oil prices. Our hope is that the price of the tour will remain the same. In any case you'll be informed right away of any possible financial changes or adjustments.

All payments should be made by check to: "Palomnik, LLC" and mailed to 1613 Campus Drive, Vestal, NY 13850. Any returned checks are subject to \$25 fee. For payment with a Credit Card; domestic or international bank wires, please contact Palomnik, LLC directly via ortours@gmail.com; +1-607-797-1058. A deposit of \$700 is required when you sign up for the trip. The deposit is non-refundable, unless pilgrimage is cancelled by the organizers due to lack of participation or for some other valid or unforeseen circumstance. To avoid any money loss, emergency/travel cancellation insurance strongly recommended.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: The deadline for signing up for the trip is June 1, 2024. The entire amount is due 91 days prior to departure, June 25, 2024. Failure to pay in full by June 25, 2024 without written notice of explanation may lead to the cancellation of your participation, with no refund of any previously committed funds.

CANCELLATION POLICY: If you need to cancel after you signed up, penalty is:

- 25% of the tour cost, 91 to 61 days prior to the departure
 - 50% of the tour cost, 61 to 31 days prior to the departure
 - 100% of the tour cost 31 or fewer days prior to the departure
- All cancellations must be done in writing as well and sent directly to Palomnik, LLC at 1613 Campus Dr., Vestal, NY 13850 and must be received for reimbursement by the dates shown in the cancellation schedule.

We also have to add that should cancellation or alteration of the program occur due to COVID and associated emergencies, civil disturbances, acts of terrorism, war, natural disaster, and other events of force majeure or acts of God (including threat or fear of same), refunds will be made only to the extent that they are recoverable, and that such cancellation or alteration may result in the total loss of funds paid by participants. It is assumed each participant has reviewed the same with respect to their own comfort level of risk and personal safety. A decision to

withdraw from the trip for these reasons or any others will be bound by the same terms of cancellation.

ALTERATIONS TO ITINERARY:

Palomnik, LLC agent reserves the right to alter, modify or withdraw the itinerary if air schedules and/or events beyond his control deem it necessary. In the event it becomes necessary for the comfort or well-being of the travelers to alter or modify the itinerary or arrangements, such alterations may be made without penalty to the tour operator and are not grounds for cancellation with refund. Palomnik, LLC agents assume no responsibility over any consequences as a result of any participant deviating from the group tour. Because of the difference in language and customs, it is expected that the traveler will follow the directions of the Palomnik LLC escort at all times.

Palomnik LLC agent or an escort reserves the right to restrict a person's participation in the group's activities, including exclusion from the group, when, in the opinion of the Tour Leader, such action is necessary.

REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:

- A passport with validity for at least six months beyond end of stay

IT IS STRONGLY SUGGESTED THAT YOU:

- Obtain insurance covering medical needs and coverage of personal property and all COVID associated emergencies
- Be aware that financial coverage for all emergency medical and other emergency needs (including those related to COVID hospitalization, treatment, or quarantine) will be your sole responsibility. We will provide all possible logistical and personal assistance, but the financial aspect is your responsibility.
- Act in a manner consistent with the surrounding environment, and follow local protocols established due to COVID pandemic
- Make arrangements to have access to sufficient funds to cover personal needs and unexpected events
- Be aware that the places that we will be visiting may not have the same amenities that you are accustomed to. Medical facilities in some areas may be limited.

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1613 Campus Drive, Vestal, NY 13850.

Telephone: 001-607-797-1058

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**REGISTRATION FORM:
ORTHODOX PILRIMAGE TO MONTENEGRO AND SERBIA
SEPTEMBER 23 – OCTOBER 5, 2024**

*To register: please complete this registration form and return it along with
your deposit check (\$700.00) made to PALOMNIK, LLC to the following address:*

Palomnik, LLC, 1613 Campus Drive, Vestal, NY 13850.

Please write "BALKANS SEPTEMBER 2024" on the memo line.

Full Name (exactly as in your passport):

Date of Birth (day/month/year):

Nationality, Passport # :

Issue and expirations date (day/month/year):

Address:

City, State, Zip/Postal Code

Home phone:

Alt. phone and Email:

Emergency Contact Information (Name, Phone, Relation):

Medical restrictions:

Dietary restrictions:

Would you prefer single accommodations at additional costs specified in the itinerary?

Please let us know if there is anything else that we should know in order to make your travel experience more comfortable and pleasant:

*Your signature below confirms that you have read the itinerary and agree to abide by Terms and
Conditions that accompany the itinerary.*

NAME/SIGNITURE:

DATE: