



The Beacon of Byzantium Greece, North Macedonia and Bulgaria

July 22- August 4, 2025

Dear brothers and sisters,

The ROCA Assistance Fund, with the blessing of Archbishop Andronik of New York and North America, invites all to participate in the pilgrimage to the holy lands of North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Greece. This unique journey will provide an opportunity for joint prayer, immersion in thousand-year-old Orthodox history, and a visit to revered shrines. The trip will take place from July 22 to August 4, 2025. Enclosed is the anticipated schedule.

If you're interested in joining us on this spiritual journey, we invite you to express your intention to participate soon!

The pilgrimage accepts children from 12 years and older who would be travelling without parents and children from 3 years old with parental supervision. For all questions about the preliminary schedule, as well as transportation, accommodation, cost, etc., please contact us either by telephone 845-825-9949 or email RocaAF@gmail.com.



Brief preliminary schedule of the pilgrimage

The Beacon of Byzantium

Thessaloniki, Greece – Mount Athos – Ohrid, North Macedonia – Sofia, Bulgaria

Thessaloniki is the capital of Northern Greece, the city of three periods - Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine - is considered the "golden gate of Christianity". The Church of St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki is a unique structure on the site of the Roman baths in the IV century. Today it is a complex based on a five-nave basilica of the VII century, with (partially) preserved Byzantine frescoes and mosaics. In the cathedral there are the relics of St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki. The Church of St. Sophia the Wisdom of God – the church was built in the VII century, is a unique building, one of the first large-scale experiments of cross-domed churches (included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites), the Church of Panagia Achiropiitos – the ancient basilica of the Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos (V century), in which golden Byzantine mosaics have been partially preserved. The Church of Sts. Cyril and Methodius and the Cathedral of St. Gregory Palamas, where his relics rest.



Holy Mount Athos. Holy Mount Athos is the earthly inheritance of the Mother of God, the only male monastic state in the world. On a cruise along the southwestern coast of Mount Athos will be able to enjoy beautiful views of the mountain while cruising along its southwestern coast.

Veria is an ancient city, located in a picturesque place, near Mount Vermion. The Apostle Paul preached in this city. Inspection of the Apostle Paul's tribune is a monument erected on the site of the preaching of the Apostle Paul, in its base there are steps on which the name of the Apostle Paul is engraved.

Not far from Veria, in a gorge, on the bank of the Alekmonas River, there is a men's skete of John the Baptist, built on the site of the cave in which St. Gregory Palamas lived for five years.

On the eastern shore of Lake Ohrid is the ancient city of Ohrid, included in the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List. In the ancient past, the city was called Lychnidos, which means "city of light". The name comes from the crystal-clear water that reflected the sun's rays on the walls of the city. Since the X century, ancient Ohrid-Lychnidos has become for the Slavs a truly city of Light – the center of the adoption of Christianity in the Balkans. It is in Ohrid, through the efforts of St. Clement of Ohrid – disciple of Saints Cyril and Methodius, the first Slavic university was created, where liturgical texts, hagiographies, prayers were translated from ancient Greek, creating the basis of Slavic unity - the Church Slavonic language.



Capital of the Republic of Macedonia Skopje. City tour of the capital Skopje. Visit to the Church of St. Clement of Ohrid - the main cathedral in the Capital. The main square of Skopje is located in the heart of the city. There is a whole complex of monuments to commanders, kings of antiquity and saints.

Capital of Bulgaria, Sofia and Rila Monastery - the largest monastery complex on the Balkan Peninsula outside Athos. The majestic Rila Monastery, surprisingly organically integrated into the picturesque mountain landscape, is the most revered Orthodox monastery in the country. The relics of its founder, St. John of Rylsk, are kept here.

This is only a brief description of the pilgrimage. Of course, picturesque views await us, the blue sky of Greece, radiant waters of Ohrid, excellent food, beautiful bays for swimming in the sea. And much more. We invite everyone on this unforgettable journey.