
Bulgaria: Sofia, exhibition opens on Catholics in “XVII-XX century”-Bulgaria and the great contribution made by clergy to culture and education

An exhibition opened today, Wednesday 17th April, about “Catholics in Bulgaria – XVII-XX centuries – Documentary evidence and books from the Archives of the St Cyril and Methodius National Library”, in the Library headquarters in Sofia. The event was attended by the Director of the Library, Krasimira Alexandrova, the Advisor to the President of the Republic for Cultural Heritage, Plamen Slavov, the Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Amelia Gesheva, mgr. Petko Valov, appointed Bishop of the Catholics of Byzantine rite by Pope Francis on 8th April. In her opening address, Ms Alexandrova pointed out that 2024 will be the 350th anniversary of the death of Petar Bogdan, Filip Stanislavov and Petar Parchevic, all three 17th-century Bulgarian Catholic bishops and Bulgaria's national heroes. The documents on display are instead in Italian, Latin, Turkish and Bulgarian, while the clerics emphasised their Bulgarian roots. On behalf of the President of the Republic, the opening address was read out by his Advisor, Slavov, who mentioned the great value and appeal of the exhibition. Deputy Minister Gesheva stated instead that the Catholics' contribution must be promoted even better and their works be known by every Bulgarian. The author of the exhibition, Radoslav Spasov, hinted at the role of the first Bulgarian Catholic bishop Ilija Marinov and the fact that Petar Bogdan wrote the first Bulgarian history that was ever known abroad, in the attempt to find support for the release of his people from the Ottomans. The author also mentioned Filip Stanislavov, the author of the first Bulgarian printed book and the founder of the grammar school of Trancioviza. Lastly, he also recalled Pavel Duvanliata, a very important poet and also a supporter of freedom. The exhibition can be visited until 9th May.

Valentina Bombelli