

---

## **Bulgaria: 1st anniversary of Pope Francis' visit to the country. Mgr. Proykov to SIR, "he has left a deep mark on our souls"**

A year has passed since Pope Francis' visit to Bulgaria. And the Catholic Church in Bulgaria is marking the anniversary, yet in a somewhat unusual way because of the pandemic. "We remember it with joy and much excitement", the President of the Bulgarian Bishops, Mgr. Hristo Proykov, told SIR news agency. On behalf of the Bulgarian Bishops' Conference, the prelate addressed a letter to the Holy Father, telling him about "the Bulgarian Catholics' desire to go to Rome and express their deep gratitude, something which is now impossible due to the pandemic". "The fact is", the letter to the Pope reads, that Bergoglio's trip "has left a lasting mark on the souls and hearts of the Bulgarian people". Retracing the highlights of his visit, the prelate recalled the meeting with the Orthodox Patriarch Neofit, characterized by "a spirit of Christian brotherhood", as well as the welcome given by other religious denominations, and, "above all, the thousands of people in the streets and squares". "Pacem in Terris", the motto of the trip, has had a strong echo in the prayer for peace, after which, Mgr. Proykov stressed, "everyone welcomed with enthusiasm the Pope's strong appeal for the peace and unity of all people of good will". "At this time of trial - the president of the Bulgarian Bishops concluded -, Catholics in Bulgaria look with admiration at Pope Francis' work for the Church and the world, and we join in support of the Holy Father, assuring him of our fidelity, love and gratitude".

Iva Mihailova