
Saints Cosmas and Damian Monastery in Tsarna Gora

Tzvetan Vassilev is one of the main contributors to the reconstruction of the monastery, the restoration of the old church that is part of it, as well as the construction of the monastery tower, cookhouse, holly spring, and outbuildings. The reconstruction included the building of a new outer wall, the fortification of the monastery walls, the construction of summer houses and a new church carrying the name of St. Silouan the Athonite. As a sign of appreciation, Tzvetan Vassilev was declared *ktetor* and senior warden of the Tzarnogorski Monastery.

The Saints Cosmas and Damian Monastery in Tsarna Gora has an important place in the clerical, cultural, and secular history of Bulgarians in the Mrakata, Graovo, and Znepole areas: today's central western Bulgaria. The abbey is part of the Sofia Bishopric and is in the Breznik Municipality of the Pernik District. Alternative names for it are Giginski or Chernogorski Monastery. The establishment has had a difficult fate, paralleling that of Bulgarians over the past millennium. Periods of prosperity and flourish have followed ones of downfall and dilapidation.

After 1989, the monastery began to resume its place as the spiritual center of the Breznik area. New Father Nikanor's entrepreneurial astuteness attracts a variety of donations directed into reconstruction of the dilapidated buildings, and providing power and internet.

Here is what Father Nikanor says about the support Tzvetan Vassilev gives the Monastery:

"*Such personalities are rare in today's business. In 2009, the onset of the crisis began to hit the Monastery's reconstruction. A common acquaintance contacted Mr. Vassilev and briefly told him that the Monastery was being restored from the ruins. We expected he might choose to sponsor something or something else from the list we compiled. Instead, he apparently asked for the sum total and covered it all. This gave a very strong impetus for the completion of the works.*

In 2010, however, the church was still unfinished, so we sought his help for a second time. His assistance saw the church completed, also. Today, thanks to Mr. Vassilev, we have a very beautiful church, built of exceptionally high quality materials. Here is something that will remain for the generations to come as a testament to this man's faith and as proof of his genuine humanity.

What impressed me was that Mr. Vassilev never hesitated for an instant. This tells me he is a creative and constructive person who does everything with the genuine desire to propel society ahead and assist this movement personally.

Mr. Vassilev retains the inspirational flame that led old worthy Bulgarians to give so that today we have the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". It was people like him that built the Third Bulgarian Kindgom and modern Bulgaria.

It is little known that Mr. Vassilev's charity does not stop here. He generously helps many individuals, children, students, and cultural institutes. His modesty is naturally a virtue, yet I think it is good for this to be known, so that others may rise accordingly and take his example."

For more information about the Monastery, click here: http://www.svetogorie.com/