

St. Dimitar Solunski Church in the Etara Quarter of Gabrovo



Tzvetan Vassilev was among the main donors for the complete restoration of this church devoted to Saint Demetrius of Thessaloniki in the *Etara* quarter of Gabrovo. At the opening of the church, His Holiness the Metropolitan Bishop Grigoriy stated his gratitude to the donor, stressing that Tzvetan Vassilev was first and foremost a spiritually wealthy person of broad views.

In 2006 the church board of the temple sought hard for sponsors for the complete reconstruction of the temple. It found him in the face of Tzvetan Vassilev, who became the exclusive benefactor of the church. At that time the Chairman of the Board was priest Stefan Stefanov (today — Archpriest, parish priest at the *Holy Trinity* church — Gabrovo).

The reconstruction work began in 2007 and continued in 2008 and 2009. First, the roof structure was completely renovated with the supporting beams being covered with wood paneling, hydro-insulation, and top plates.

Copper gutters have been placed and the windows were replaced with UPVC double glazing. The exterior walls were insulated with fiber, net, and new plaster. The whole area around the church was covered with plates while along the boundaries of the property a concrete wall with metal elements was erected. The electrical installation was completely replaced. The plaster sections damaged by moisture were removed and the whole church was whitewashed. Air conditioners were installed, the church was equipped with a security alarm system and outside decorative lighting.

Two highly recognized experts — the Head of the *Church Art* Department in the Faculty of Orthodox Theology at the University of Veliko Tarnovo — Associate Prof. Miglena Prashkova and the famous restorer Stefko Aenski (secretary of the *Restoration* section of the Union of Bulgarian Artists and member of the management of the Association of Restorers in Bulgaria) inscribed the whole church and restored the icons.

The reconstruction of the church ended on 29 November 2009 when it was consecrated by His Holiness the Metropolitan Bishop Grigoriy of Veliko Tarnovo in the presence of the benefactor Tzvetan Vassilev. From 4 November 2010 the Chairman of the church board of St. Dimitar Solunski church in

the *Etara* is priest Tzvetan Spirov.