



This year's Days of the People of Goodwill at Velehrad will be a dress rehearsal for the next year's celebrations

ZLÍN . Today, at the press conference in Zlín journalists were informed about the course of this year's Days of the People of Goodwill that will take place at Velehrad from 3rd to 5th July. In our country, the Velehrad Days of the People of Goodwill are the biggest celebrations of the feast of the Slavonic missionaries, Saints Cyril and Methodius, which falls on Thursday 5th July. This year, they will take place within the Cyrillo-Methodian anniversary year which we will commemorate in 2013 . the 1150th anniversary of the arrival of the Slavonic missionaries to Great Moravia, which is next year.

It is a great honor for me to assume the auspices of the Days of the People of Goodwill. Velehrad is a real spiritual center of the Zlín region, and all people who come here . as well as to other places of pilgrimage . to draw energy for their lives know it. The Zlín region supports not only the Days of the People of Goodwill as such but for several years it has also participated in the restoration of the local basilica as well as of the premises around the basilica and the whole infrastructure ensuring conditions necessary for thousands of pilgrims,+said Stanislav Mizák, Governor of the Zlín region, who assumed the auspices of the event along with Livia Klausova, wife of the President of the Czech Republic, and Jan Graubner, Archbishop of Olomouc and Metropolitan of Moravia. At the same time, the governor said that this year's celebrations will have a character of a dress rehearsal before the next year's celebrations.

The deputy governor, Jindřich Ondruš, responsible for culture, tourism and cooperation with churches, expressed his hope that with a certain probability Velehrad could see also the Holy Father in 2013.

The Zlín region wants not only to celebrate this important anniversary in a dignified way but also use this opportunity for making our region visible. Now, in collaboration with both state and church representatives of a number of European countries we strive to create the first pilgrims' path which would follow in the footsteps of Saints Cyril and Methodius and which would have Velehrad as its destination,+said deputy Ondruš. At the same time, he informed about an international conference prepared by the Zlín region in cooperation with the Eastern Moravian Tourism Headquarters which will take place on 3rd July. At Velehrad this conference will discuss the intention to create this unique pilgrims' path. The conference will be attended by representatives of churches, of the diplomatic service, state and public administration and partner regions.

The Zlín region plays an important role in the preparations of the Cyrillo-Methodian jubilee, which was emphasized by Josef Konečný, the secretary of the project of the Days of the People of Goodwill, before the journalists today, when he said, "The Zlín region was the initiator of the project 'Velehrad 2013' It suggested a number of activities which were subsequently adopted on the national level."

This year's Days of the People of Goodwill will offer a rich program of activities for whole families, like e.g. various games, tournaments, hand re-writing of the Bible, an exhibition related to the children's art competition "The Way of the Two Brothers", an exhibition opening "To love the good and to oppose the evil" devoted to Cardinal Beran and, of course, the traditional Concert for the people of goodwill, which will be transmitted by the Czech Television and the Czech Radio in a live transmission.

According to Josef Konečný, this 13th year will have a new part, "School of Love", a course for laypeople led by experienced psychologists which should help to create healthy atmosphere in families and to prevent unnecessary conflicts and misunderstandings.

On Thursday 5th July in the morning, the celebrations at Velehrad will culminate in the national pilgrimage with a festive holy mass celebrated by the Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal Dominik Duka.

An inseparable part of the Days of the People of Goodwill is also the international meeting of wheelchair invalid persons organized by Maltese Aid in cooperation with the Czech Grand Priory of the Order of the Knights of Malta.

The village of Velehrad participates mainly through organization of transportation of pilgrims. There will be a shuttle service from the parking lot at the Staré Město bypass. Only cars with a special permission will be allowed to enter Velehrad. I believe that both cyclists and tourists will make use of the bike paths leading to Velehrad to a maximum extent, said Stanislav Gregor, the mayor of the village.

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