



At a banquet reception held at the New Gracanica Monastery in Chicago, Bishop of New Gracanica and Midwest America Longin presented Consul General Desko Nikitovic with the Order of Emperor Constantine, awarded to him by Serbian Patriarch Irinej.

Saturday, 12 October 2013. Bishop Longin hosted a reception at the New Gracanica Monastery in honour of Desko Nikitovic who served as Consul General in Chicago, from 1 March 2003 until 28 September 2013. The reception was attended by some 300 guests, including representatives of all national organizations of the diaspora in the United States, a large number of prominent and business people, lawyers, doctors, and Vuk Nastic, a father of two small children from California who had been separated from their parents for almost eight months, and only after the intervention of Consul General Nikitovic were they returned to their parents.

All representatives of the Serbian national organizations spoke of the tremendous efforts invested by Desko Nikitovic and the great results that the Consulate, headed by Nikitovic, achieved in the previous decade in the cultural, economic and social aspects, above all in bringing the home country and the diaspora together. In a very emotional speech Vuk Nastic said that he believed that his children would have never been returned to him and his wife if Consul General Nikitovic had not put so much effort into it. During the evening, the letter from HRH Crown Prince Aleksandar and Princess Katherine Karadjordjevic, addressed to the Nikitovic family, was read. The letter points out that the departure of Consul General Nikitovic was a great loss not only to the Serbian Consulate in Chicago but also to the Serbian diaspora.

Bishop Longin of New Gracanica - Midwest America also talked about the lasting cooperation between the Church and the Consulate General. The Bishop also said that the family of Desko Nikitovic donated large sums of money for humanitarian projects in Serbia, as well as the Serbian diaspora in America. He particularly underlined the contribution of the Consul General's

wife Ryan Nikitovic, whose family is one of the largest donors in the Serbian diaspora.

At the end of the programme, Bishop Longin presented Nikitovic with the Order of Emperor Constantine. This medal was awarded by the Serbian Patriarch to the Consul General for ten years of dedicated work in Chicago. Nikitovic will be the first holder of this Order in the United States. Desko Nikitovic, who is continuing his business career in Chicago, kindly thanked the Church, the national organizations and all individuals who have been supporting the work of the Consulate and his family's efforts to improve the image of Serbia in the United States, the strengthening of economic cooperation with the United States, as well as the establishment of closer ties between the home country and the diaspora.