

## Saint Elijah Monastery a Nun monastery in the heart of Sofia suburb Mladost 2 (Dyrvenica)

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Sofia (Bulgaria) is a notable city for those looking for spirituality. There are several monasteries situated inside the city. I'm living in Sofia since only 3 months and still I didn't find the time nor had a car to ride in them. So far I was only in one of the monasteries **nun Monastery saint Elijah (svet Iliq)** 3 years ago when I was guest of a dear friend one Sunday evening he brought me there. **St. Elijah** monastery is situated in Mladost 2 city suburb (at the end of Dyrvenica suburb).

Today I rode to the monastery with my girlfriend *Svetlana* for the Night evening service. We were there about 17:00 but unfortunately the evening service was just over in this monastery evening service begins in 16:00. The serving priest was still there and we had a small chat with them, just to find out he used to be the old Abbot of **Shipchenski Monastery**. I was earlier in Shipchenki Monastery and I know personally current Abbot there father *Ianuarij* and was curious to know the priest just met is the spiritual father of fr. *Ianuarij* (name meaning January). The monastery is very little and I could see only one of the nuns who was very hospitable with us. Before approaching the monastery there is a tiny pine tree forest.



St. Elijah Monastery started its existence during the old period when Bulgaria was under a Turkish Slavery in year 1595 on a place where Turkish army slaughtered a number of Bulgarian Orthodox Christians refusing to accept Muslim faith. Slaughtered martyr Christians were thought to be part of the small revolt organized by Bulgarian revolutionaries trying to free Bulgarian land from the yoke of Turkish Empire. Short after on place of monastic Church a cross in remembrance of the martyrs was set. Since martyrdom of Bulgarian Christians the place was believed to be sacred and many people went there to pray to God to help them in the various troubles of their daily lives.





Later on a small chapel was built on place of martyrdom and other small buildings were build soon to become a fully functional monastery. Current Monastery Church and monk cells buildings were re-build next to the remains of the old monastery in y. 1924. In *Sofia's st. Elijah* monastery are kept many middle aged 15th century Church slavonic books, unique ancient icons present from *Russia* to *Bulgaria* at the end of Turkish-Russian Bulgarian liberation war.

Most valuable monastic sanctuary is a big tapestry - *The Mother of God with the infant*.

As of time of writting the Abbes is mother *Matriona* which by amazing Gods providence is also Russian.