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Metropolitan Ioan of Banat calls for acts of kindness during the Dormition Fast

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“We are all called to weave a crown of good deeds, following the example of the Mother of God and the saints, by helping our brothers and sisters who are suffering at home and in hospitals, orphans and widows, the elderly burdened by loneliness, need, and frailty, and large families, combining good deeds with prayer,” urged Metropolitan Ioan of Banat in a message on Wednesday, at the beginning of the Dormition Fast.

His Eminence described the Dormition Fast as “a two-week spiritual retreat in which, with joy and humility, with fasting and church hymns, with pure prayer from faithful hearts, we honour the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“This two-week fast precedes the blessed Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos (August 15). The Church instituted it because the Holy Virgin Mary learned the mysteries of fasting from an early age at the Temple in Jerusalem, preparing herself through fasting and prayer before her glorious Dormition.”

An Unspeakable Spiritual Beauty
“The devotion to the Mother of God, established from the early years of the Church, is of unspeakable spiritual beauty,” His Eminence emphasized.

“The akathists and parakleses, prayers and hymns, poems, religious hymns, and icons of the Mother of God, the protectress of Christianity, are treasures of our Romanian Orthodoxy.”

The large number of churches, monasteries, and chapels under the protection of the Mother of God shows “how much the faithful Romanian people have placed their hope in her as an intercessor with her Son, with the Holy Trinity our God.”

“A model of faith and pure life, humility and prayer, love to the point of sacrifice for her Son and for us humans, her spiritual children, the Mother of God teaches us during the two weeks of fasting—adorned with feasts dedicated to Saint John Jacob of Neamț, the Transfiguration, Saint Theodora of Sihla, and Saint Niphon, Patriarch

of Constantinople—to clothe ourselves in the garments of charity and care for our fellow human beings who are in need and suffering.”

Metropolitan Ioan urged priests to open parish churches daily throughout the fast and to perform the Akathist or Parakleses of the Mother of God.

“Prayers for world peace and the increase of love among people and nations, the cleansing of the soul through fasting, confession of sins, and communion with the Holy Mysteries are the precious gifts we are called to place before the throne of the Most Holy Trinity—God, during this fast dedicated to the Mother of God,” concluded His Eminence Father Ioan.

The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church has declared 2024 as the Solemn Year of Pastoral Care and Assistance of the Sick and the Commemorative Year of all Holy Unmercenary Healers.

Photo: Metropolis of Banat

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