

Patriarch Daniel encourages youth to seek life's meaning in Christ at National ASCOR Meeting



The National Meeting of the Association of Romanian Orthodox Christian Students (A.S.C.O.R.) took place from October 18 to 20, 2024, at the “Patriarch Justinian” Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Bucharest. The gathering coincided with the 2024 Solemn Year of Pastoral Care and Assistance of the Sick, as declared by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

In a message to participants, Patriarch Daniel emphasized the significance of the event, calling it a valuable opportunity for reflection and collaboration among the young members of A.S.C.O.R. He highlighted the Church’s role in guiding youth toward discovering the true meaning of life through Christ.

“The Christian youth, through the grace of baptism, already carries the promise of eternal life,” Patriarch Daniel noted, encouraging young people to embrace both intellectual and spiritual responsibility as they follow Christ, “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6).

The Patriarch also praised the many activities of A.S.C.O.R., including liturgical participation, educational workshops, and social outreach, which he described as key to spiritual growth and personal formation.

The event celebrated A.S.C.O.R.’s work over the past 30 years and provided a platform for continued spiritual and community engagement.

Please find below Patriarch Daniel’s message to Orthodox students.

The Joy of Discovering the Meaning of Life in Christ

The 2024 National Meeting of the Association of Romanian Orthodox Christian Students (ASCOR) is taking place from October 18 to 20 at the “Patriarch Justinian” Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Bucharest.

This event is held in 2024, which the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church has declared the Solemn Year of the Pastoral Care and Assistance of the Sick.

This gathering offers a valuable opportunity to reflect on the activities carried out thus far and serves as a platform for consultation and collaboration among the young members of ASCOR, as well as their mentors.

At the age of youth, every person experiences a deep desire to offer themselves, receive love from others, and seek purpose in life. Young people often channel this self-offering in their quest for life’s meaning.

The Church of Christ, through its youth ministry, responds to this pursuit, as the Christian youth already carries within themselves the grace of Baptism, which is a foretaste of eternal life and joy in the love of the Holy Trinity.

In this regard, the Creed recited at Baptism and during the Divine Liturgy is the most concise and profound expression of the meaning of life. This becomes the Church’s mission—a preparation for eternal life.

As they journey through personal growth and participate in their communities’ spiritual and social life, young people uncover new sources of spiritual joy and opportunities to form their personalities.

Therefore, on this life path, young people need to nurture responsibility toward both their intellectual and spiritual lives, following the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6).

He also declared, “I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him bears much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

The activities you have been engaged in for over 30 years are inspired by your love for participating in the liturgical life of the university chapels. There, you prepare for life by attending the Holy and Divine Liturgy, as well as other weekly services and prayers.

You also organize catechesis, spiritual conferences, educational and recreational workshops, social and philanthropic activities, pilgrimages, summer camps at Orthodox monasteries, and thematic trips to cultural sites.

To highlight the importance of your presence in the Church, the BASILICA Publishing House of the Romanian Patriarchate has published a volume of conference proceedings titled Philokalic Chronicles—A.S.C.O.R. Commemorative Volume on the occasion of this year’s national meeting.

All these beautiful and inspired activities help you discover the meaning of Christian life as a sacred program for personal and communal living. The true Christian life is a taste or vivid experience of Christ’s presence in those who love Him, responding to the invitation: “Taste and see that the Lord is good” (Psalm 34:8).

We encourage you to continue cultivating love for actual values, which give meaning to life, a sense that can only be found within the Church. Finding the meaning of life involves living and sharing in the Source of Life—Christ the Lord.

We congratulate the organizers and bless all the participants in the National Meeting of the Association of Romanian Orthodox Christian Students (ASCOR). We wish you all health, joy, peace, and much divine help!

With paternal blessings,

† DANIEL

Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church

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