

## **Romania Patriarch urges believers cultivate 'flowers of faith' in the Garden of the Mother of God**



**Recalling that Romania is known as 'the Garden of the Mother of God' on Thursday, His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel invited believers to take care of this garden and cultivate 'the flowers of faith, hope and humble and merciful love'.**

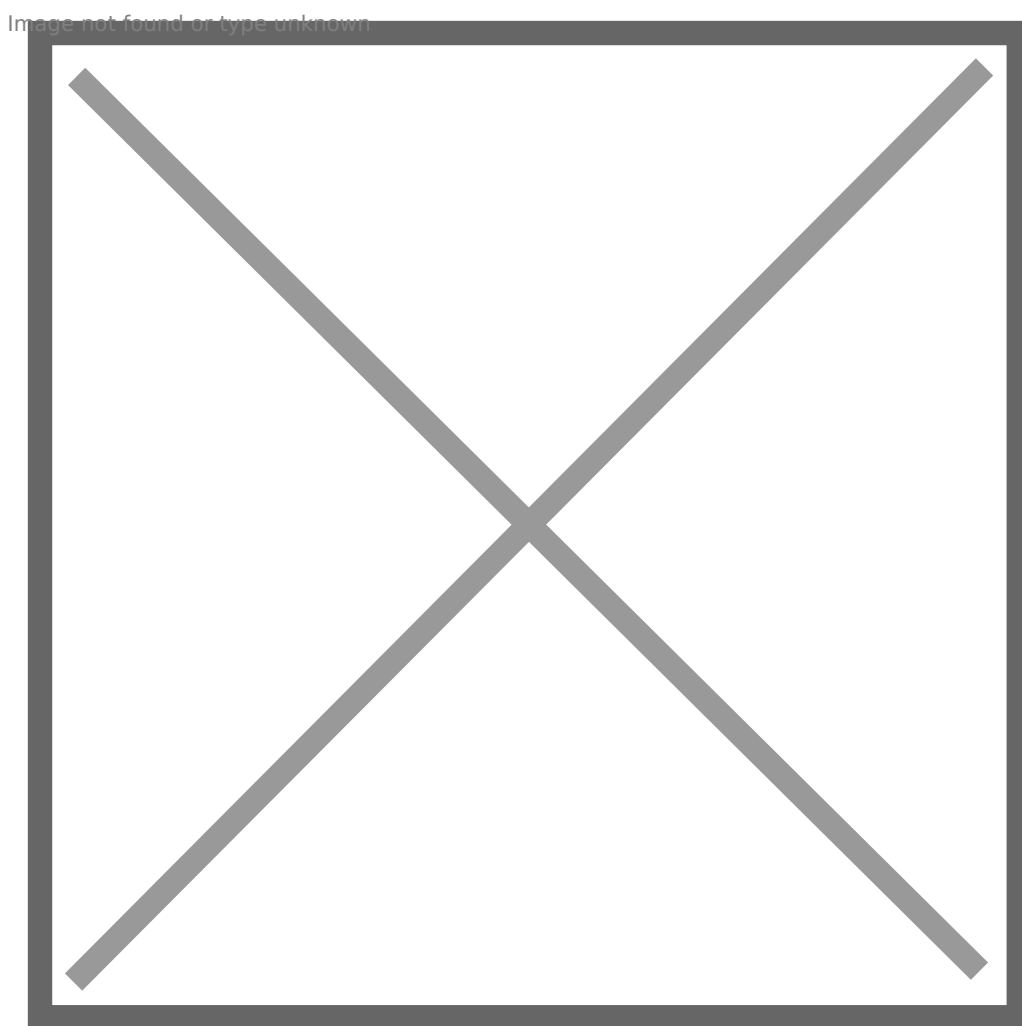
'We are in the Garden of the Mother of God, which is full of monasteries and churches. As every garden, it must be cultivated with flowers,' the Patriarch of Romania said during his homily delivered at the Patriarchal Cathedral in Bucharest on the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos.

'Sometimes there are weeds that need to be removed,' the patriarch cautioned referring to the fact that we must remove from our lives 'what troubles the Mother of God'.

‘Let us cultivate the flowers of faith, of hope, and of humble and merciful love,’ the Patriarch underscored.

The Romanian Patriarch explained that Romania was named the Garden of the Mother of God following a miracle that happened in the 15<sup>th</sup> century at Bisericani Monastery.

During his homily, His Beatitude also referred to the symbols of the festal icon and troparion. He noted that the Dormition of the Mother of God is the most important church feast dedicated to the Virgin Mary.



*Patriarch Daniel presided over the Divine Liturgy on the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos at the Patriarchal Cathedral in Bucharest, August 15, 2019. Photo: Basilica.ro / Mircea Florescu*

The patriarch offered his reflections on the text of the troparion, saying that ‘this feast is not called the Resurrection of the Mother of God, because no one has seen her resurrected, as the disciples saw the risen Christ many times.’

‘It is also not called Ascension into Heaven, because she did not ascend into heaven with her own strength. She was lifted up to heaven by the will and power of Her Son.’

The passage noting ‘Being the Mother of Life, she was translated to life’ helps us understand that ‘the mystery of the Dormition of the Theotokos and of her passing first with the soul and then with the body into eternal life is the sign of the Saviour’s love for His Mother.’

Patriarch Daniel stressed the immense love of the Blessed Virgin for humankind, noting that ‘she did not abandon the world or the Church, and she knows the needs, troubles and sufferings of all those who live in the world.’

‘The Mother of God particularly prays for the salvation of the souls of those who repented but did not have the time to perform good deeds.’

The Patriarch said that the Dormition of the Theotokos is celebrated at the end of the ecclesiastical year because this feast is about ‘the end of the earthly existence and the beginning of a heavenly existence of the Mother of God.’

Calling the Blessed Virgin ‘the human being closest to the Most Holy Trinity’ and ‘an undisputed intercessor’, the patriarch reminded that in the Orthodox Church the Theotokos is invoked in almost every prayer.

Being the ‘Protectress of families’ and ‘the Mother of Suffering’, the Mother of God ‘understands the sorrows families go through and the suffering of parents who bring up their children’.

“The Mother of the Lord is the Protectress of virgins and nuns in monasteries, of all the monks who have taken their vows of purity, poverty and obedience. She is the Protectress of the servants of the holy altars, of hierarchs, priests and deacons, because Her Son is the High Priest,” said His Beatitude.

“The Mother of the Lord is the Protectress of widows, orphans, the sick, the poor, the helpless, she is the joy of all who sorrow,” added the Patriarch at the end of his sermon, while urging the believers to ask for the help of the Most Holy Theotokos in order to receive health and salvation, peace and joy and especially to help us ‘live in Romania as in the Garden of the Virgin Mary’.

Concelebrants for the Divine Liturgy included the patriarchal auxiliary bishop Ieronim of Sinaia and the Very Rev. Archimandrite Teofil Anastasoae, the superior of the Romanian Settlements in the Holy Land.

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