26/02/2025

First Romanian Orthodox Bishop in North America commemorated at Mono Monastery

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Bishop Policarp Morușcă, the first hierarch of Orthodox Romanians in North America, was commemorated Sunday at the Romanian Monastery of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and St. Ephraim the New in Mono, Canada.

The monastery's abbot, Hieromonk Policarp Atenagora, officiated the memorial service after the Divine Liturgy.

The service reflected that Romanians in the diaspora have not forgotten the significant contribution of Bishop Policarp, who organized the Romanian Orthodox Diocese in America. It also underscored their gratitude and respect for his spiritual legacy.

Moreover, the commemoration date was not randomly chosen; it coincided with the feast of Saint Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, celebrated on February 23.

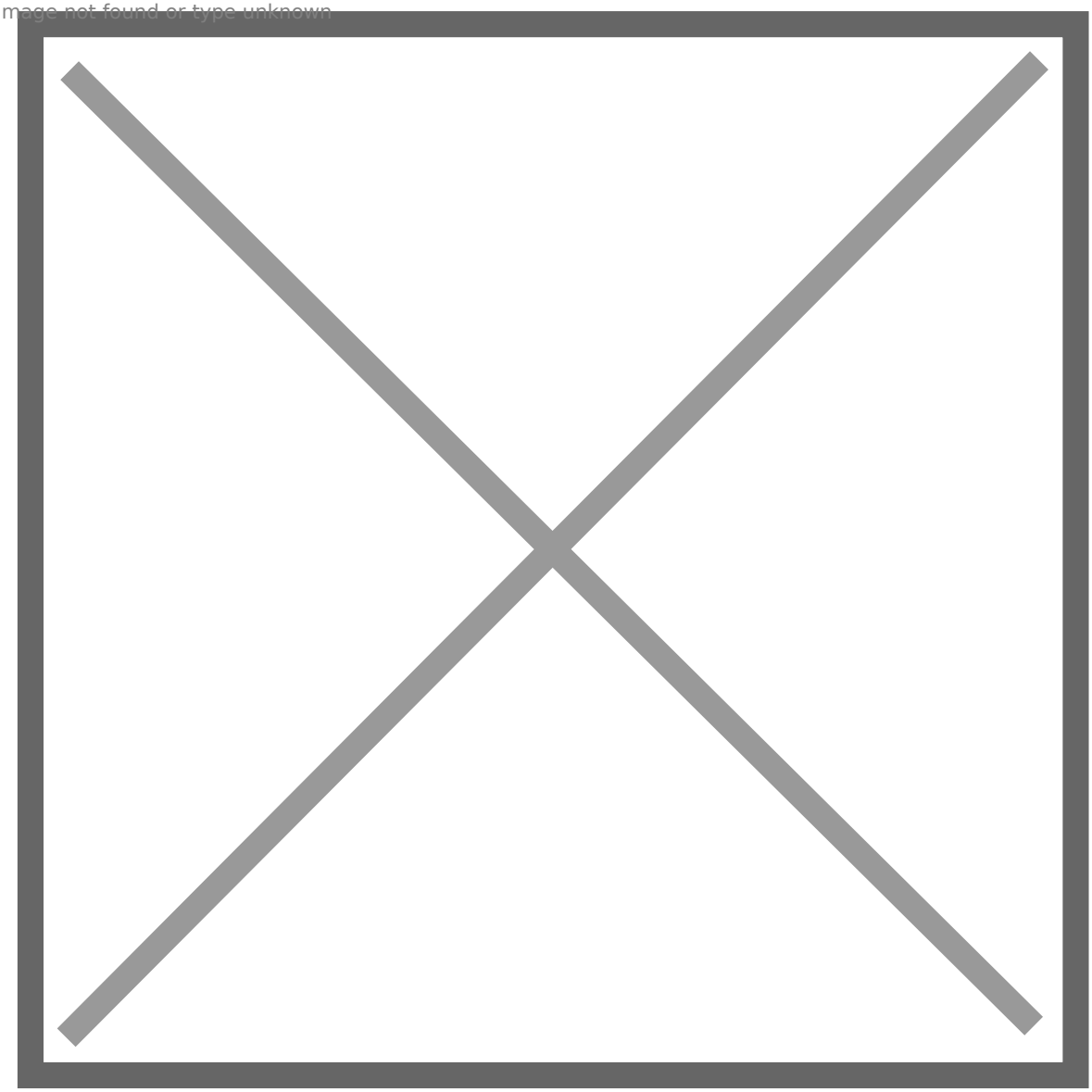
Missionary Work in North America
Bishop Policarp Morușcă began his mission in North America in 1935 when the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, considering the needs of the time, appointed him as the first missionary bishop for Romanians in the United States and Canada.

Ordained on March 24, 1935, and enthroned in Detroit on July 4, Bishop Policarp led Romanian Orthodox communities until 1939. He organized the Romanian Orthodox Diocese in America with six deaneries, served by 34 priests, laying the foundation for a strong ecclesiastical structure for Romanian immigrants.

During his four years across the Atlantic, Bishop Policarp initiated crucial projects for Romanian spiritual identity. He founded the diocesan residence Vatra Românească in Michigan, which included a farm, a retirement home, and a monastic nucleus.

Additionally, he launched the publications Solia and Calendarul Solia, strengthening cultural ties between the Romanian diaspora and the Orthodox Church.

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Return to Romania

Returning to Romania in 1939 to attend a Holy Synod meeting, he was prevented from returning to America due to the outbreak of World War II and subsequent political tensions. Forced to remain in the country, he faced increasing pressure from the communist regime, which forcibly retired him in 1948.

He continued his ministry at the Reunification Cathedral in Alba Iulia and later served as abbot of St. John the Baptist Skete from 1955 to 1958.

Bishop Policarp Moruşcă passed away on October 26, 1958, and was buried at St. John the Baptist Skete in Alba Iulia.

In 2019, his remains were reinterred at Christ Pantocrator Monastery in the Crypt of Hierarchs by Archbishop Irineu of Alba Iulia.

Photo: Holy Cross Orthodox Monastery – Mono / Facebook

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