

Synodal Act of the Romanian Orthodox Church: 140 years of Autocephaly and the Centennial of the Romanian Patriarchate



The Synodal Act marking 140 years of autocephaly of the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Centennial of the Romanian Patriarchate was presented on Monday, at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy celebrated at the outdoor altar of the Patriarchal Cathedral.

The Tomos was signed by His Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, by His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of the Romanian Orthodox Church, and by the members of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

SYNODAL ANNIVERSARY DOCUMENT

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity consubstantial and undivided,

Heeding the heavenly voice of our Father who speaks through the prophet: “I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.” (Isaiah 48:17);

And joyfully receiving the Psalmist’s chant to the Lord: “One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.” (Psalm 144:4);

And again, being partakers of the same radiant power, always following the command of our Saviour Jesus Christ: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20);

In the Year of Salvation 2025, Romanian Orthodoxy celebrates the Centennial of its elevation to the rank of Patriarchate and the 140th anniversary of the recognition of the Romanian Orthodox Church’s autocephaly.

In this heavenly light and holy joy, We, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, led by His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of Romania, and in the presence of His Holiness Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople – New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, celebrated on Monday, October 27, 2025, in the historic Patriarchal Cathedral “Saint Emperors Constantine and Helen” in Bucharest, the recognition of the autocephaly of the Romanian Orthodox Church in 1885 and its elevation to the rank of Patriarchate in 1925. These two momentous historical events hold great significance for the ecclesial life of the Romanian people, as they have profoundly influenced the dynamic institutional and administrative development of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The canonization of Romanian saints, the establishment of new dioceses, the organization of the Romanian Orthodox diaspora, and the substantial contribution of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the field of inter-Orthodox, inter-Christian, and interreligious relations would not have been possible without these providential milestones in its history and development.

Both the granting of autocephaly to the Romanian Orthodox Church on April 25, 1885, and its elevation to the rank of Patriarchate on February 4, 1925, took place within a context of favourable political and social circumstances, as the result of a close cooperation between church authorities and state authorities. Autocephaly and Patriarchal status are not merely ecclesiastical administrative terms, but also a practical recognition of the Orthodox faith and the dignity of an independent people, organized within a unitary and sovereign state.

The proposal to elevate the Romanian Orthodox Church to the rank of Patriarchate was supported by all members of the Holy Synod, and on February 4, 1925, the Holy Synod approved the elevation of the Orthodox Church of the Kingdom of Romania to the rank of Patriarchate, explicitly granting the title of Patriarch to the then-serving Archbishop and Metropolitan of Ungro-Wallachia, Miron Cristea. On this occasion, the Holy Synod also adopted the official Document establishing the Romanian Patriarchate. Subsequently, the decision of the Holy Synod to establish the Patriarchate was submitted to the Parliament of Romania for ratification, and King Ferdinand I promulgated, on February 23, 1925, Law no. 669/1925 concerning the elevation of the Archdiocesan and Metropolitan See of Ungro-Wallachia, as Primate of Romania, to the rank of Patriarchal See.

The Tomos of the Ecumenical Patriarchate recognizing the establishment of the Romanian Patriarchate, issued on July 30, 1925, by Patriarch Basil III of Constantinople, arrived in Bucharest at the end of September 1925. Earlier, on March 12, 1925, Patriarch Miron Cristea had sent an extensive irenic letter to all the sister Orthodox Churches, informing them of the elevation of the Romanian Orthodox Church to the rank of Patriarchate, and presenting the historical, cultural, ecclesiastical, and social-political reasons that formed the basis of this decision.

Over the course of these 100 years, the Romanian Orthodox Church has borne abundant fruit in every respect, under the leadership of the Holy Synod and its six Patriarchs: Miron Cristea, Nicodim Munteanu, Justinian Marina, Iustin Moisescu, Teoctist Arăpașu, and Daniel Ciobotea. Thus has been fulfilled the blessing of Ecumenical Patriarch Basil of Constantinople, conveyed through the Tomos of the Ecumenical Patriarchate concerning the recognition of the rank of Patriarch of Romania: "May the elevation of the Sister Church of Romania to Patriarchal dignity and rank... become for her the occasion of a new flourishing, and may every perfect grace and gift descend always upon her from on high."

The current culmination of the 100th anniversary of the Romanian Patriarchate was especially marked by the Consecration of the Painting of the National Cathedral,

dedicated to the Ascension of the Lord (Heroes' Day) and to Saint Andrew the Apostle, the First-Called, Protector of Romania, on Sunday, October 26, 2025, by His Holiness Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople – New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch, together with His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of Romania, and a large assembly of hierarchs, priests, and deacons, in the presence of thousands of pilgrims, clergy, monastics, and lay faithful from Romania and abroad.

The Centennial Year – 2025 of the Romanian Patriarchate also marks the 140th anniversary of autocephaly. On Holy and Great Thursday, April 17, 2025, at the historic Patriarchal Cathedral, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church consecrated, for the 23rd time, the Holy and Great Chrism, preserved in 56 specially crafted silver amphorae made for this occasion.

Moreover, this year witnessed (on February 4, 2025) the proclamation of the canonization of 16 Romanian saints (venerables and confessors) from the 20th century—as well as the canonization and inclusion in the liturgical calendar of 16 holy Romanian women: martyrs, nuns, wives of rulers, mothers of saints, and confessors of the Christian faith (July 1-2, 2025). The exemplary lives of the newly canonized saints, along with their icons approved by the Holy Synod, have been included in the 13 volumes of the Synodal Synaxarion of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Their veneration is carried out through the Liturgical Services of the Romanian Saints proclaimed on the occasion of the Centennial of the Romanian Patriarchate, which constitute a holy prayer and an act of veneration brought to the Saints, as well as a liturgical book for the servants of the holy altars.

The joy of the Romanian people was made complete by the wonderful news of the canonization of the Romanian Venerable Saints Dionisie of Colciu, Petroniu, Nifon, and Nectarie of Prodromu, from the Holy Mount Athos, by decision of the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, presided over by His Holiness Bartholomew I, during the sessions of August 30-31 and October 16, 2025.

The Centennial of the Romanian Patriarchate offers us the occasion to give thanks to God for His providential care over the faithful Romanian people throughout history, because the elevation of our Church to the rank of Patriarchate is the fruit of national unity and ecclesiastical autocephaly, as well as a recognition of the intense spiritual life of Orthodox Christians—clergy, monastics, and laypeople—across all the lands inhabited by Romanians over the centuries. As institution and organization, the Romanian Patriarchate has been, throughout its 100 years of existence, an unfading torch of Christian faith and national unity. The canonized Romanian saints are the holy fruits of the Gospel of Christ, which the Holy Apostles Andrew and Philip proclaimed to our Daco-Roman ancestors in the

first century of the Christian era.

Praising with devotion and gratitude the Most Merciful God, who has granted us to partake in this anniversary moment in the history of the Romanian Orthodox Church and as a testimony for the generations that will follow us, this Anniversary Synodal Document has been prepared and signed today, October 27, 2025.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all! (2 Corinthians 13:13).

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