

Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Romania concelebrate Divine Liturgy for National Cathedral first patronal feast



His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem and Patriarch Daniel of Romania on Friday concelebrated the Divine Liturgy for the first patronal feast of the newly-consecrated National Cathedral dedicated to Saint Andrew the First Called.

Concelebrants for the Divine Liturgy included several hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Patriarchal homily

In his homily delivered after the proclamation of the Gospel, the Patriarch of Jerusalem referred to the life and activity of St Andrew as well as the holy mission of the Church.

‘Keeping the evangelic and ecclesiastical tradition of the tradition in Christ regarding the communion of love, we have responded to the noble invitation of Your dear and profound Beatitude and we have arrived today from the Holy City of Jerusalem, the City of the Great King, to the great, historic and blessed country of Romania, in much delight and jubilation, in order to participate at the festivities of

the Patriarchate of Romania on the commemoration of the Holy and Glorious Apostle Andrew the First-called, founder of the Church of Romania, at the recently consecrated and magnificent Holy Church dedicated to him, a jewel of architecture in the city of Bucharest and in all Romania, and the fruit of the reverence of the Romanian people.'

Patriarch Theophilos noted that he will also participate at the national festivities on the independence anniversary of Romania on December 1.

'During this blessed visit of Ours, we have been given the opportunity to convey the blessing of the God-receiving Cave of Holy Bethlehem, of the Horrendous Golgotha and of the Holy Sepulchre, with the experience of which we receive God's grace each and every day, as appointed guards of these shrines.'

'We also bring with us the epitachelion of Saint John the New Chosebite from Romania, and part of his relics, as a faithful testimony of his holiness, for the sanctification of the faithful who will be venerating them.'

'We also carry the holy relics of the Holy Fathers of Hozeva.'

'We thank You, Your Beatitude, Patriarch of Romania Daniel for Your brotherly invitation along with the honour made to Us for welcoming Us in person and by the members of the sacred Hierarchy of the Orthodox Church of Romania and the clergy of the Christian people, and congratulate You as well as all the Romanian people on the double ecclesiastical and national festivities.'

'We foretaste of the delight and joy for our sanctification through the celebration of the bloodless sacrifice tomorrow, on the commemoration of the Holy and Glorious Apostle Andrew, by whose intercessions we beseech the Lord for the protection of the Orthodox Romanian Church and all the Romanian people.'

Solemn Commemorative Act

His Grace the patriarchal auxiliary bishop Varlaam of Ploiesti read out a Solemn Commemorative Act of the Holy Synod regarding the national unity of all Romanians and the 1918 Great Union Centennial.

'The realization of the great ideals of Romanian national unity and dignity was made possible by the special contribution of the Romanian Orthodox Church which has always been with the people through all its efforts to cultivate national consciousness and to affirm the desire for unity and independence,' the document reads.

Exchange of gifts

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, Patriarch Theophilos thanked 'our Lord Jesus Christ and Saint Andrew the First Called' for the special occasion to stress 'sacramentally at the Divine Liturgy' the unity between the Orthodox Churches of Jerusalem and Romania.

Patriarch Theophilos presented Patriarch Daniel with an icon of the Nativity of our Lord 'to celebrate this important tie between the two sister Orthodox Churches and between the Romanian people and Christians in the Holy Land.'

'May Saint Andrew the First Called, whose feast day is today, grant you strength, and continue to protect you especially during these days when the Church is called to be a confessing Church and a strong, united witness in the world,' His Beatitude said Nov. 30.

Patriarch Daniel thanked the Patriarch of Jerusalem for visiting Romania and presented him with a mosaic icon depicting Saint Andrew.

'Thank you for your fatherly care shown to the increasing number of Romanian pilgrims coming to the Holy Land, but also for your paternal care and attention towards the Representation of the Romanian Patriarchate in Jerusalem,' Patriarch Daniel said.

The National Cathedral was consecrated last Sunday, November 25, by His Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew together with Patriarch Daniel.

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