

Patriarchal auxiliary bishop meets Orthodox scouts group, highlights youth engagement



Patriarchal Auxiliary Bishop Varlaam of Ploiești, the Holy Synod's general secretary, met on Thursday, May 14, at the Patriarchal Palace with representatives of the International Orthodox Christian Scouts Organisation "Desmos".

The bishop highlighted the importance of involving young people in educational and community activities amid the challenges of contemporary society.

"It is very important that young people living under the temptation of technology, isolation and the extreme limitation of interpersonal relationships become engaged in organisations of this kind."

The hierarch recalled that after the communist period, the scouting movement in Romania resumed its activity and began developing closer relations with the Church:

"We rejoice that there are organisations made up of Orthodox Christians seeking

this cooperation with the Orthodox Church.”

“After the Revolution, the movement was re-established in Romania and developed more intense contacts with the Orthodox Church, but because we had lost the skills of such cooperation during the years when it was banned, they drew closer to the Roman Catholic Church, which still retained experience in scouting,” he said.



Young people involved in Church life

The Patriarchal Auxiliary Bishop underlined the growth of volunteerism among young people, highlighting their involvement in activities organised by the Romanian Patriarchate and local parishes.

“Volunteerism among young people has developed admirably over recent decades,” Bishop Varlaam said, adding that the Church carries out numerous educational and social projects dedicated to children and adolescents.

He mentioned the programmes “Christ Shared with Children” and “Choose School”, through which the Church supports vulnerable children:

“We are trying to save them from the negative realities faced by today’s society.”

“The Church shows particular care for the younger generation,” the bishop added, stressing that young people must be given the opportunity to discover “authentic spiritual life”.

Cooperation with the Romanian Orthodox Church

Desmos representative in Romania, Roxana Boltașu, explained that Romania is among the founding countries of the international Orthodox scouts organisation.

“In Romania, this is the third Desmos world committee meeting. Romania has been a founding country since 1997, when the Orthodox scouts grouping was established at the global level.”

The Desmos representative in Romania highlighted the importance of the meeting at the Patriarchate and the openness towards closer cooperation with the Romanian Orthodox Church:

“We are very glad to have been received here at the Patriarchate and that we will begin very close cooperation.”



Roxana Boltașu noted that the organisation conducts activities in numerous local centres across the country in cooperation with parishes and local communities.

“We are trying to bring non-formal education alongside the Church, all for the purpose of building courageous young people.”

Desmos, an Orthodox platform for scouts

During the meeting, representatives presented the activity of Desmos, founded in Athens in 1997.

The platform seeks to develop the spiritual dimension within the scouting movement and promote Orthodox values among young people.

The organisation currently brings together 25 member structures from various regions of Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East and Africa, aiming to strengthen fraternity, cooperation with local Churches and education based on Christian values.

Photo: Lumina Newspaper / Luigi Ivanciu

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