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## **The joy of communion in the Romanian church in South Africa**



**Message of His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, on the occasion of the consecration of the Romanian Orthodox church in Johannesburg, South Africa, 30 November 2019:**

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### **The joy of communion in the Romanian church in South Africa**

Your Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos,  
Your Excellency Mr. Ambassador Marius-Constantin Borănescu,  
Your Excellencies,  
Beloved faithful,

The Romanian church in Johannesburg, South Africa, wore solemn vestment on the occasion of its consecration by His Eminence Damaskinos, Metropolitan of Johannesburg and Pretoria, together with our delegate, His Eminence Iosif, Metropolitan of Western and Southern Europe. This unique, holy and blessed event is a proof of the living and active faith of the Romanians settled temporarily or permanently on the African continent and who today see their wish to have their

own place of worship fulfilled, in which to pray and be thankful to God in the Romanian language.

A sacred space of prayer, the newly consecrated church is a new gate of heaven. Through this “gate of heaven” Christ the King of Glory enters, He Who, after His Resurrection, ascended with His body to heaven and placed His humanity on the throne of the glory of the Most Holy Trinity. He mysteriously enters in His church, in which He is always present through the Holy Sacraments performed here, and gives His heavenly gifts to those who pray, as the token of eternal life. Thus, the newly consecrated church becomes “**the house of God and the gate of heaven**” (*Genesis 28:17*) or **the house of the Most Holy Trinity**.

This newly consecrated church has the patronal feasts *Holy Apostle Andrew, the First-called, Protector of Romania*, and the *Synaxis of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Baptist and Forerunner John*. Thus, Holy Apostle Andrew becomes not only the protector of Romania, but also the protector of the Romanians from South Africa, together with the Holy Prophet John the Baptist. The second patronal feast was given because Mr. Ioan Cuemjiev, spiritual son of the Romanian Orthodox Church, is in fact the founder and benefactor of this church on the African continent.

On the joyful occasion of the consecration of the new church, we address words of thanks to His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, for His blessing offered for the construction of this church, as well as to His Eminence Metropolitan Damaskinos of Johannesburg and Pretoria for the permanent care shown towards the Romanian community living in this country.

At the same time, we congratulate reverend father Vasile-Răzvan Tatu, together with the entire Romanian Orthodox community, for completing this project close to their heart, this church being, to date, the only Romanian place of worship in Africa.

As a sign of appreciation, we confer to reverend father Vasile-Răzvan Tatu the *Order of Holy Apostle Andrew*, for the clergy. In particular, we thank Mr. Ioan Cuemjiev, the founder of this church, and we confer to him the *Order of the Patriarchal Cross*, for the lay people. At the same time, we confer *Sanctus Stephanus Magnus Order* to Mr. Marcel Bian, trustee of the Romanian Orthodox Parish in Johannesburg.

We pray the Saviour Jesus Christ to protect this church and to bless all those who will pray here and all those who will help it in the future, to give them good health and salvation, peace and joy, for many and blessed years to come!

† Daniel

Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church

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