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Founder of first Romanian Church in Africa honoured with highest distinction during consecration ceremony

Ioan Cuemjiev, the founder of the first Romanian Church in Africa, was honoured with the highest distinction of the Romanian Patriarchate, during the consecration ceremony performed on the feast of St Andrew the First-Called in Johannesburg.

The delegate of the Patriarch of Romania was His Eminence Metropolitan Iosif of Western and Southern Europe.

The Divine Liturgy and the consecration ceremony were concelebrated Nov. 30 by Metropolitan Iosif and the local Metropolitan Damascene of Johannesburg and Pretoria.

The Romanian church in South Africa is located in the Midrand Region of Johannesburg's administrative region plan. The construction works started in 2014 with the blessings of Patriarch Theodoros II of Alexandria and All Africa and Patriarch Daniel of Romania.

For the consecration ceremony, Patriarch Daniel sent a message in which he

thanked Patriarch Theodoros and Metropolitan Damascene for the for the permanent care shown towards the Romanian community living in South Africa.

The Romanian Patriarch congratulated 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.

The parish priest received the Romanian Patriarchate's Order of Saint Andrew.

The newly consecrated Romanian Church in South Africa has two Patron Saints: Apostle Andrew the First-Called, Protector of Romania, and the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John.

The ceremony was attended by the Romanian Ambassador to South Africa, Marius-Constantin Boranescu, who offered an official reception occasioned by the National Day of Romania.

The history of the Romanian Orthodox Parish in South Africa dates back to the year 2000, when the Romanian community in Johannesburg founded the Saint Andrew Romanian Christian Orthodox Association (SARCOA).

On February 7, 2002, the parish was officially registered in the official Company Registration Service in Johannesburg.

In 2000-2002, the divine services were held in private spaces, and between 2002-2008, Romanians prayed with Greek, African and English believers at the "Saint Nicholas of Japan" Church in Brixton.

Between February 2008 and July 2008, the services were held in a chapel at the priest's residence in Edenvale.

In 2008, Father Mihai Corpodean was transferred to the Romanian parish in Auckland, New Zealand, the Johannesburg parish community being taken over by priest Răzvan Tatu.

Since his arrival in Africa, the liturgical services have been officiated at the "Saint Nectarios" Church in the Orange Grove neighborhood.

Subsequently, a plot of land was bought in Midrand, where the first Romanian church in Africa is located.

— Source: basilica.ro | Photography courtesy of Trinitas TV / Deacon Gheorghe

Cristian Popa