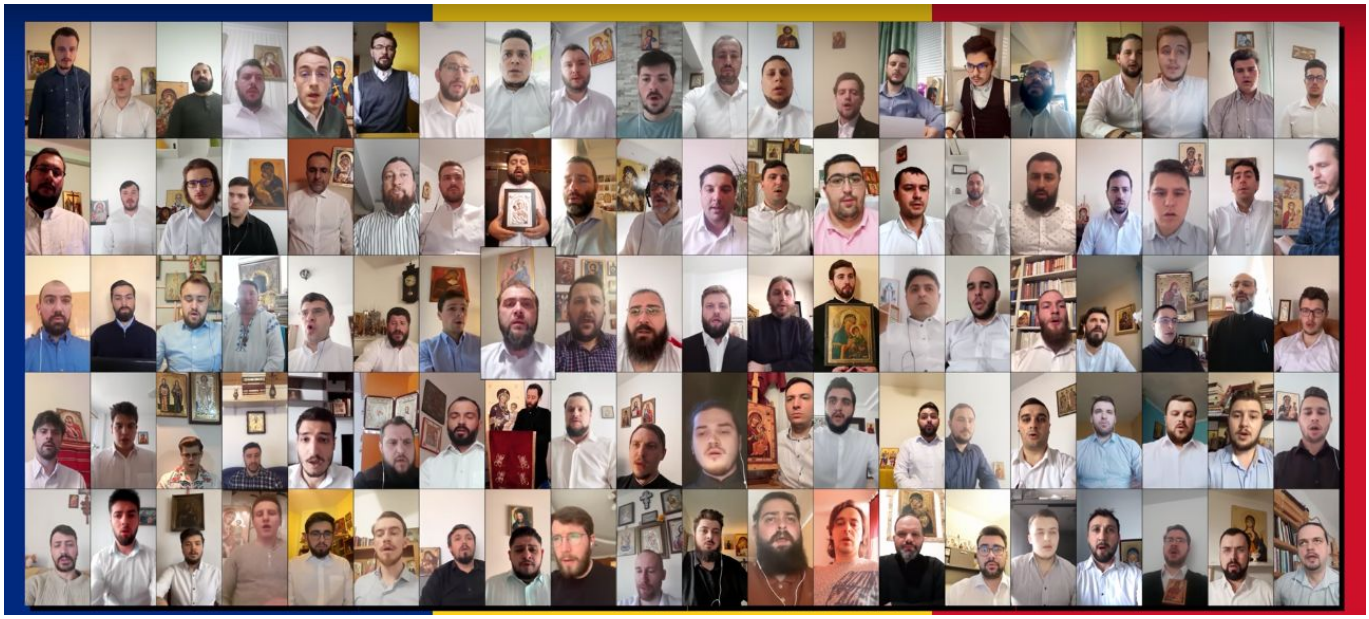
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‘To Thee the Champion Leader’: 100 top voices minister peace to a struggling nation in viral video



A hundred church chanters formed a nationwide choir on Sunday teaming up for a communal singalong in honour of the Mother of God.

The church singers found a way to record one of the most famous hymns of all, singing it individually, on their phones.

Then the videos were combined into a virtual cell phone choir to bring a message of hope and encouragement to Romania in these difficult times.
Archdeacon Mihail Buca invited the chanters to sing ‘To Thee the Champion Leader,’ as an act of ‘confession’ in times of pandemic.

‘For me, this a novel, beautiful and difficult work. Our believers needed this breath of fresh air, especially under the given conditions,’ Protopsaltes Mihail Buca told the Basilica News Agency.

Titled ‘100 for Romania,’ the video clip went viral on YouTube with more than 12,000 views overnight.

“100 people sang from the depths of their soul”, wrote Mihail Bucă on his official Facebook page, stressing the importance of communion, even virtual fellowship.

“With these wonderful people, we want to give you the joy of seeing you again in unity.”
The idea of the project has appeared since the beginning of the state of emergency, said Archdeacon Mihail Buca.

“I meditated on what is going on in the life of the Church, with chanters and believers, and I said to myself that a simple hymn that loved by the faithful is needed. That is how I decided on the kondakion To Thee the Champion Leader.”

After the support received from those who dealt with the technical side, Paul Simon Esperando and Gabriel Buzea, the archdeacon started inviting church singers to join the project.

‘The first idea was to start with the Tronos Byzantine Choir, which at its numerous concerts gathered an average of 40-50 psaltai, even 70 for larger performances. In the given conditions, these numbers seemed very small, knowing that there are many talented people in the country and lovers of Byzantine music,” said the conductor of the Byzantine Choir Tronos.

Singers recorded their videos in different cities across Romania including Bucharest, Iasi, Cluj-Napoca, Craiova, Mehedinti, Baia Mare, Alba Iulia, Constanta, Tulcea, Brasov etc.

“Then the idea of having 100 people came to me! 100 for Romania in prayer! I searched for important conductors from all the major Byzantine choirs in the country; each conductor came with a few close members, and we reached this number.”

The initiative was highly appreciated by the netizens, but also by the chanters who contributed to the project.

“I gladly joined this initiative in which I showed that the psaltai of our country can gather in a singing union no matter where they fulfil their obedience to the Church! May God bless the right-believing people,” said Father Alexandru Grigoraş, one of the participants.

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