

Putna Monastery holds celebrations of St Stephen the Great in absence of Abp Pimen for first time



For the first time since the canonization of Ruler Prince Saint Stephen the Great (1992), the Saint's feast day was celebrated at Putna Monastery in the absence of Archbishop Pimen of Suceava, abbot Melchisedec Velnic noted Thursday.

The celebrations took place in special conditions caused by the pandemic. The abbot of Putna also lamented the absence of the "Romanian fellows from Northern Bukovina" (Chernivtsi Region), of those from Bessarabia, as well as the lack of the military parade organized on July 2, every year, since 1996.

The locum tenens of the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti, Metropolitan Teofan of Moldavia and Bukovina celebrated the Divine Liturgy, together with Bishop Andrei of Covasna and Harghita and the assistant bishop to the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti, Damaschin of Dorna.

Reflecting on the day's gospel reading from John 10: 1-9, Metropolitan Teofan said that the Church identifies St. Stephen with the "Good Shepherd."

"Both then and now, the Church and the nation recognize the Grand Prince as 'the Good Shepherd.' The Moldovans then considered him a father, a master and, above all, a voivode," said Metropolitan Teofan July 2.

In turn, Bishop Andrei spoke about the life and virtues of Saint Stephen the Great. The hierarch emphasized the strong faith, the love for the people and the dignity of St. Stephen.

Bp Andrei mentioned the fact that Saint Stephen is the founder of the ancient Diocese of Vad – Cluj County.

The Divine Liturgy was followed by a laying of wreaths at the tomb of Saint Stephen the Great. The ceremony was accompanied by musical and poetry performances. The members of the traditional vocal group "Ai lui Ștefan, noi oșteni" from the Technological High School "Ion Nistor" in Vicovu de Sus sang various patriotic songs and recited poems.

The final word belonged to the abbot of the monastery who expressed the joy, but also the pain that accompanied this year's celebrations.

"Even if we are far from each other on this day, we have hope; we have the faith that Stephen, the one who defended the nation and the country and entered the hearts of the people, will take care of this people. We see that the devotion and reverence we have for St. Stephen unites our souls wherever we are, and there are no barriers between us. Stephen unites us because he is a landmark, a model for all of us," Archim. Melchisedec Velnic noted.

The abbot announced the publication of the annual issue "Words to young people" and thanked those who supported the celebrations.

[Source](#)