

## **Patriarch of Romania donates icon and 6,000 Euros to new crisis pregnancy center “Holy Empress Helen”**



The “Holy Empress Helen” Counseling and Information Center was inaugurated on Sunday in the presence of Father Ciprian Ioniță, Patriarchal Counselor, who officiated the blessing service and offered a gift on behalf of His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel: the icon of the Holy Emperors Constantine and Helen.

The new centre will provide support for women in pregnancy crisis and it was established by the Association for Pregnant Women and Family Support after the first centre of the organization, “Saint Alexandra the Empress”, was overwhelmed by the great number of help requests.



The project was made possible by 300 donors from Romania and abroad, who donated 21,000 Euros between June 8 and July 16, in response to the organization's online campaign "Renew Hope for Both of Them". The amount has enabled the organization to open and run the centre until October 31, 2020.

"We thank His Beatitude Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, for the spiritual and material support offered and for being a real father for children – both born and unborn", said Alexandra Nadane, Executive Director of the Association for Pregnant Women and Family Support, in her inaugural speech.

The gratitude was really from the bottom of the heart, since "His Beatitude's gift covers almost a third of the needed amount – he was indeed our most generous donor. It is the truth and we testify it", she added.



Alexandra Nadane spoke of the difficulties she met, of which the most important was the Covid-19 pandemic. She said she found courage in the lives of saints. “The Holy Empress Helen gave birth to a child who changed the history of Christianity and of the world in a very socially unstable period”, she mentioned.

“The Holy Brâncoveanu Martyrs, whom we commemorate today [they were canonized in 1992 and are commemorated by the Romanian Orthodox Church on August 16, the date of the centre’s inauguration – ed. note] built a Romanian culture and identity, churches and social institutions in a time when the Ottoman Turks were sovereign over Christian countries”, Alexandra Nadane noted.

“The Holy Prince Stephen the Great built dozens of churches and monasteries during a reign marked by dozens of wars and fights. Not one of these saints waited for a peaceful time to do something. They all built the Good amidst crises. Looking at their deeds, we took courage.”

After the state of emergency ended, Alexandra Nadane found out that the owner of the building had just turned down the offer of a video-chat company to rent the space.

“So, a place which could become destructive for women’s lives became a place of renewed hope for women in pregnancy crisis, offering them the chance to rejoice in the birth of their babies”, she said.

Alexandra Nadane mentioned:

“Pregnancy crisis is an emergency situation. Often, there is only one chance to offer support to a woman in pregnancy crisis. Who could afford to miss it? We couldn’t. If an unborn child is lost because its mother had nowhere to receive support from in her pregnancy crisis, that child could never be replaced.”

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Between August 17 and September 17, the centre holds the event entitled The Open Door Days at the “Holy Empress Helen” Counseling and Information Center. Everybody can get a guided tour of the centre and discuss with the worker about their activity.

Photo courtesy of Cătălin Apostol

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