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Patriarch of Romania urges support for college freshmen



The Patriarch of All Romania, His Beatitude Daniel, marked the beginning of the new academic year in the country by underlining that university freshmen need heightened support by their families, their schools and the Church, something that is now more crucial than ever, due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In a message for the start of the new academic year 2020/2021, His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel highlighted that given the health crisis caused by the new coronavirus, “young students need more support from the Family, School and Church to form themselves intellectually and professionally, but also spiritually and culturally.”

The Patriarch noted that the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church

declared 2020 a Solemn year of the pastoral care of parents and children.

In his message, the Patriarch urged gratitude to “our grandparents and parents, but also to our teachers and professors.”

Blessing for the new academic year: full text

On the new academic year 2020/2021, we bless all students and teachers in universities and postgraduate education, and we ask God to give them good health, much joy and abundant help.

The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church declared 2020 as Solemn Year of the Pastoral Care of Parents and Children, wishing to highlight the importance of the family for the education of children and young people.

Today, when the Christian family faces many health, moral, social, and spiritual problems, it is necessary to defend, help, and promote the family by cultivating the values of the Christian faith and the perpetual evangelical virtues, such as freedom and responsibility, kindness and solidarity.

In the context of the current pandemic, when it is necessary to adapt the means of teaching and learning to the new situation, young students need more support from the Family, School and Church to form themselves intellectually and professionally, but also spiritually and culturally.

In an excessively high-tech information society, there is a risk that education will be reduced to a process in which the emphasis is almost exclusively on acquiring the information needed to gain skills and abilities so that the young person is easily and safely integrated into a system of immediate practical efficiency, but an increasingly impersonal and unilateral system.

It is in such a situation that it is relevant to capitalize on the formative specificity of Christian education which is not limited to a narrow and ephemeral earthly horizon but is open to the light of the eternal love of Christ, who promised: “The one who believes in me will live, even though they die” (John 11:25).

This year, in particular, we have a duty to remember our grandparents and parents gratefully, and also our teachers and professors, who educated and guided us on the path of intellectual, scientific knowledge, but also the permanent spiritual values.

The current period of the pandemic teaches us how necessary communication is between people, the possibility to meet face to face, to share our joys and sorrows, successes or failures, expectations and aspirations.

We now better understand the truth of faith, namely that life and health are gifts from God, which must be defended and cultivated to grow spiritually and live socially as free, responsible, hardworking and generous people.

As in previous years, at the beginning of this new academic year 2020-2021, we urge the parishes and youth organizations of our Church to provide material and spiritual help to students from disadvantaged families for university studies, to bring joy to their family, school and the Romanian people.

With high appreciation and blessing,

† Daniel
Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church