

09/10/2020

Metropolitan Teofan warns against religious freedom violations as only locals can venerate relics of St. Parascheva



Metropolitan Teofan of Moldavia and Bukovina has warned against the violation of religious freedom rights as authorities decided that only people domiciled in Iași are allowed to enter the Metropolitan Cathedral and venerate the holy relics of Saint Parascheva.

“Moldavia is currently living one of the saddest periods in its history.”

The Metropolitan released a message highlighting that this deprivation is added to ‘the pain caused by the fact that many of our fellow people are affected by the new epidemic.’

“The ban is respected to such an extent that there have been more representatives of the police around the Metropolis than worshipers.”

“It is the effect of a discriminatory measure, which violates numerous legal provisions and international principles that protect the freedom of religious expression,” Metropolitan Teofan cautioned.

“It is for the first time, I think, in the history of Moldova, when something like this happens.”

“There were invasions, wars, plagues of all kinds, totalitarian regimes. The holy relics of Saint Parascheva have always been a source of relief, healing and strengthening, and people have been allowed to approach them. Today, they have come to be considered a source of contamination.”

Metropolitan Teofan recalled that for seven months, the Church has been working hard to protect people’s health, and will continue to do so.

‘Believers have endured severe restrictions on their freedom to manifest religious beliefs in the name of fighting the plague. Everything has a limit though, and if this limit is passed no one profits.’

The Metropolitan of Moldavia and Bukovina asked forgiveness to the priests and believers in the area, as well as all those who usually came to venerate the relics of St Parascheva ‘for the inability to facilitate their access to veneration, according to Church order.’

‘I ask everyone to turn this pain into a time of repentance, prayer and good deeds.’

His Eminence urged priests to celebrate the Divine Liturgy daily and to read the supplicatory canon and akathist to St Parascheva.

He also urged people to keep fast for several days ahead of St Parascheva’s feast day.

‘Everything so that God may look back at us, Saint Parascheva may forgive us, the medical staff may be properly encouraged and appreciated, the people may do what is necessary to protect their health and the health of their peers, and the authorities may have the wisdom of decisions considering the scale of the epidemic, but also the fact that there are many people in this country who have faith in God and the healing power of the prayers of the saints.’

Photography courtesy of Doxologia

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