

Church and Colectiv club: Hearsay versus Facts



The tragedy at Colectiv nightclub directly affected several hundred families but caused injuries - many still open - at the level of the entire Romanian society. The Church was not left untouched by the accusations either, some partially real and assumed, others totally unfounded that hover in the public space even 5 years after the event.

Hearsay: The priests did not pray at the scene of the tragedy

Fact: Among the first to arrive at the site of the tragedy was an Orthodox priest, Vasile Bîrleanu, a servant at a Chapel at the Bucharest Inspectorate for Emergency Situations Dealul Spirii.

He arrived there with the crew of the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations. He was with the victims who were in a difficult situation and prayed for their souls at the scene of the tragedy. The priest spoke about that night in an [interview](#)

with Basilica.ro.

Hearsay: The Church was absent/indifferent

Fact: His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel was the first public figure in Romania to send a message of compassion and make an urgent appeal for blood donation. An exemplary mobilization followed at the level of the Church.

Hearsay: The Church has done nothing for the victims

Fact: The Church materially supported the survivors of the Colectiv club fire, offering food and health products in four hospitals in Bucharest: Elias, Bagdasar-Arseni, Floreasca and the Municipal Hospital. The Church financially supported the victims and their families, both through the Archdiocese of Bucharest and through the other Dioceses.

The victims were not forgotten. They were commemorated immediately after the accident, but also, according to the Church's tradition, at 3, 6, and 9 months, respectively annually.

The Archdiocese of Bucharest built a monument in their memory at Broșteni Church, the place of worship closest to the Colectiv Club.

"The efforts made by the Church have been the most significant. No institution in the country has made efforts to align with the demands of young people as much as the Church has done."

- Father Constantin Necula

Hearsay: Divine punishment, Halloween, Satanism

Fact: Some people claimed then that the fire was divine punishment for young people celebrating Halloween or listening to "satanic" music. The Romanian Orthodox Church denounced the forced associations made between the tragedy at Colectiv club and Halloween.

The news that an alleged anonymous priest from Prahova would have made such

statements was denounced by the Patriarchate as misinformation: “We regret the fact that in such moments when compassion and solidarity with those hard tried after the tragedy in the Colectiv Club are required, there are still people who try to incite hatred and intolerance,” the Patriarchate’s Press Office said.

“We do not judge people and we do not mock them,” said Patriarch Daniel.

As for rock music, the well-known priest Constantin Necula said that he loves this musical genre. “I believe that not all rockers are Satanists, just as I believe that not all Orthodox are Orthodox to the same extent,” said Fr. Necula.

THE PATRIARCH AND COLECTIV CLUB

The concrete deeds made by the Church for the victims, even from the first moments of the tragedy, were unjustly overlooked, while the reinterpreted statements of Patriarch Daniel filled the news bulletins. The explanations given in response to journalists by the Patriarch were taken as reproaches.

Patriarch Daniel explained that the Church has its own ordinance and that services are not performed anyway, anywhere, just for the show.

The Patriarch explained that he did not go personally to the place of the tragedy in order not to make a show, being a public space, not a churchly one, but also because of respect, since many people did not want the presence of priests there. From the beginning of the “March of Silence” there have been slogans against the Church.

Immediately after the fire, the names of all the victims were personally mentioned by His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel in private prayer, at “Saint George” Chapel of the Patriarchal Residence, which was not made public.

Subsequently, Patriarch Daniel himself officiated a Memorial Service in memory of the victims of the Colectiv club fire, 40 days after the tragedy, at the Patriarchal Cathedral.

He then offered prayers for peace and unity.

The Patriarch also participated in the funeral services of some people who lost their lives at the Colectiv club.

“We apologize if some of our words were insufficiently clear or were

misinterpreted,” the Patriarch of Romania said at the time.

As every year, on October 30, 2020, the Orthodox priests prayed for the souls of the Colectiv club fire victims at Bucur Square and at the nearby “Saint Nicholas – Broșteni” Church.

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