

## **Patriarch of Romania: We have never received something as a gift in our history. Everything was obtained through sacrifice**



The union of Romanians in a single national unitary state was accomplished after centuries of suffering, many spiritual and material sacrifices, sacrifices of human lives,' Patriarch Daniel stressed during a Te Deum service at the Patriarchal Cathedral celebrating Romania's National Day on Tuesday.

The Patriarch underlined that Romania's Great Union was not a random event, nor a simple event caused by the end of the First World War.

"First of all, this Union was achieved because it was prepared spiritually and sacrificially. And the situation called the end of the First World War was just one of the factors that contributed to this achievement."

During the service officiated on the National Day of Romania, Patriarch Daniel thanked God for the unity of Romanians and remembered the founders of the Great Union. Several believers dressed in folk costumes attended the service. Secretary of State for Religious Affairs Victor Opaschi was also present.

“A model work of co-responsibility

In his speech at the end of the Te Deum service, the Patriarch stressed that the Union was “a model work of co-responsibility between political leaders and people who spiritually lead the Romanian people.”

His Beatitude listed evidence that “the Church has contributed greatly to the cultivation, preservation and promotion of the consciousness of the unity of the Romanian language, faith and culture.”

The Patriarch recalled the multitude of prints – worship books and books of Christian teaching in Romanian – which “whether they were printed in Moldova or Wallachia, reached Transylvania to help the Romanian Orthodox brothers who were under foreign rule to cultivate the unity of faith and Romanian feeling.”

Besides, the patronal feasts of the monasteries that contributed to the cultivation of the consciousness that “Romanians are the same even if they are under different dominions.” An important role was played by the sermons of hierarchs and learned priests such as Metropolitans Barlaam (Varlaam) and Dositeus (Dosoftei), but also by the initiatives of the faithful ruler princes.

For example, the Romanian Patriarch reminded that St Stephen the Great built churches in Transylvania on personal property and that Michael the Brave made the first Union being advised by priests, because “in Transylvania, the Church was the only Romanian structure he could count on at that time.”

The Church also contributed during wartime

During the War of Independence, “the Church provided material aid and priests who helped the soldiers fight and stood with them on hard days as spiritual fathers, counsellors.”

In the First World War, 250 priests called “military confessors” were present on the front. Of these, twenty priests were executed in Muntenia, and the same number in Dobrudja, the Patriarch of Romania recalled.

His Beatitude also mentioned the monks and nuns who cared for the wounded and sick soldiers during the typhus epidemic, but also the help provided by the Church for orphans and war widows.

“We have never received something as a gift in our history. Everything that was obtained was obtained through sacrifice,” the Patriarch underscored December 1.

His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel said that the priests who died on the front were

joined by those persecuted by the Austro-Hungarian authorities in Transylvania: “150 were imprisoned and over 200 deported to the western part of Hungary - Sopron county or district.”

“We have sacrifices everywhere from the servants of the Church and a lot of spiritual, pastoral and patriotic activity carried out by the people of the Church because they felt that Romanian unity means freedom, liberation, and also dignity.”

“A work of divine justice

“It is very important to remember on this day that all these great Romanians, both from Bessarabia, Bukovina, and from Transylvania, Banat and other areas of the country who desired unity were convinced by this work as not only a political work, but a work of divine justice, of God’s help to a faithful, humble and humiliated people,” said His Beatitude recalling the words written on the Arc de Triomphe: “After centuries of Christian suffering endured and hard struggles for the preservation of the national being...”

“In other words, in the Romanian people, the Cross was never separated from the Resurrection and the Resurrection from the Cross. Because when the Cross is carried with a strong faith in the Crucified and Risen Christ, it secretly contains within it the power of the Resurrection.”

“May God help us to always have this strong faith in the Crucified and Risen Christ and to cherish those who have sacrificed themselves for the achievement of our national unity, which, unfortunately, has not been preserved in its fullness,” prayed the Patriarch mentioning that in 1940 Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and part of Dobrudja were detached from their motherland.

Patriarch Daniel stressed that a tribute to all those who suffered for the fulfilment of the ideal of the Great Union was brought in the Centennial Year, one day before the consecration of the National Cathedral when inside the Altar Table was placed the list of over 300,000 names of Romanian soldiers fallen on the battlefield.

“The pandemic calls us to humility and hope

“Today, in the context of the pandemic, we are, of course, somewhat sad, because we cannot express all our joy regarding the Romanian unity,” the Patriarch noted.

"This trial, the Covid-19 pandemic, calls us to humility, but at the same time to hope. If this disease shows us that life and health are gifts of God that we must keep, cultivate, nurture, then we will receive His help and have stronger faith in the healing power of Christ, the Physician of our souls and bodies, and a stronger belief in the immortality of the soul and in the universal Resurrection."

At the end, the Patriarch congratulated the doctors:

"On this National Day, we congratulate all the doctors and thank all those who either in hospitals or at the homes of the sick take care of them. Not only the doctors in the hospitals but also the general practitioners who take care of the patients affected by this pandemic."

"We also pray for the rest of the souls of the medical staff and the patients who died in their fight with this new coronavirus."

"Every day the Church prays, at the end of its services, for those who are sick, but also for those who care for them, so as not to despair, to strengthen their faith with the hope that we will return to a state in which we will not have our faces covered with masks and not to keep the distance from each other, but to manifest ourselves naturally," concluded Patriarch Daniel.

On the National Day of Romania in all churches was celebrated the Te Deum service for the heroes of the Romanian nation, who through their sacrifice enlightened by faith in God and love of country, achieved the national unity of Romanians in 1918.

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