

Patriarch Daniel proclaims 2021 Solemn Year of pastoral care of Romanians abroad, Commemorative Year of the reposed in the Lord



During a ceremony held at the Patriarchal Cathedral on January 1, His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel proclaimed 2021 as a Solemn Year of the pastoral care of the Romanians outside Romania and a Commemorative Year of the reposed in the Lord.

The Romanian diaspora is the fifth largest in the world, in relation to the total domestic population of the country, according to a report of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

In his speech on New Year's Day, Patriarch Daniel highlighted the 'special attention' that the Romanian Orthodox Church gives to the needs of its faithful

abroad.

While often faced with 'coldness and suspicion,' Romanians can reconfirm their identity and ancestral faith through the help of the religious services officiated in their mother tongue, but also through cultural and philanthropic activities carried out by the Romanian parishes abroad.

Patriarch Daniel urged Romanians living far from the country 'to stay in constant contact with their loved ones who remained at home so that the great geographical distances do not cause emotional distress or spiritual alienation of some from others and to maintain family unity.'

The Patriarch called for an increased communion and fraternal cooperation between Romanians in the Diaspora and those at home. His Beatitude urged everyone to cherish their families as 'the most precious intimate space' where genuine love can be cultivated.

Patriarch Daniel assured the Romanian Diaspora that the Romanian Orthodox Church, 'as a mother who never abandons her sons and daughters,' will continue to assist its faithful "through her constant prayers and her concrete pastoral, social-philanthropic and cultural activities."

The Patriarch recalled that the Holy Synod declared 2021 a Commemorative Year of the reposed in the Lord in an effort to highlight the liturgical and cultural value of cemeteries.

"The commemoration in the Church of those reposed in the Lord is an act of Orthodox faith and a testimony of love for others."

The mortuary cult, the Patriarch explained, is a manifestation of "steadfastness in faith, continuity and unity in thought and feelings over generations."

Patriarch Daniel ended his speech with a prayer for the good health, salvation and protection of all Romanians. He also asked the Most Compassionate God to number the dead among the choirs of the righteous.

2021 - Solemn Year of the pastoral care of Romanians outside Romania and Commemorative Year of the reposed in the Lord; the liturgical and cultural value of cemeteries: full text

The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church declared the year 2021 a

Solemn Year of the pastoral care of Romanians abroad and a Commemorative Year of the reposed in the Lord; the liturgical and cultural value of cemeteries.

The solemn and commemorative themes highlight two essential coordinates of priority in the life and the pastoral-missionary activity of our Church.

The pastoral care and the special attention shown by the Romanian Patriarchate towards the Romanian Orthodox communities outside the country's borders materialized through the establishment of numerous new parishes and dioceses to meet the spiritual needs of Romanian Orthodox believers outside Romania.

Through its ministers, the Mother Church supports and encourages her spiritual sons and daughters outside the country's borders and understands the hardships they face.

Migrant Romanians aspire to a prosperous future, but sometimes live in increasingly secularized and individualistic societies; they are often viewed with coldness or suspicion, which does not inspire a sense of peace and contentment.

Therefore, in the Romanian Orthodox churches abroad, Romanians feel the joy of rediscovering and living the ancestral faith, they participate in the liturgical life and alleviate their consuming longing for loved ones and birthplaces, they reconfirm their deep identity and rediscover their origins.

They gather especially around a parish priest, to whom they tell in their mother tongue not only the sins at confession but also the daily problems.

Through worship, but also cultural events and social-philanthropic actions organized by parishes in the Romanian diaspora, the permanent values of Orthodoxy and the Romanian people are promoted, Romanian traditions are transmitted, and the Romanian language is cultivated, all these contributing to preserving cultural, ethnical and Orthodox ecclesiastical identity of Romanians in the diaspora.

Simultaneously, the promotion of the Romanian Orthodox identity ensures a social integration in the host countries without cultural assimilation and denationalization.

We hope for a harmonious coexistence of Romanian migrants with the citizens of the adopting countries, especially now when, in many places in the world, the medical, moral, spiritual and economic crisis is manifested by social tensions that can degenerate into interethnic and interreligious conflicts.

With a lot of parental love, we urge Romanians living far from the country to stay in

constant contact with their loved ones who remained at home so that the great geographical distances do not cause emotional distress or spiritual alienation of some from others and to maintain family unity.

Increasing communion and fraternal cooperation between Romanians working or studying outside Romania and their loved ones in the country is a necessity.

We advise Orthodox believers at home and abroad to cherish the family – consisting of man, woman and children – because the God-blessed family is the most precious intimate space in which conjugal love is expressed, but also parental, filial and fraternal love.

We urge them to educate the young generation in the spirit of love for God, the Church and the nation, and to cultivate in children and young people essential virtues such as love and compassion, solidarity with people in difficulty, gentleness, sincerity, courage and trust.

By the decision of the Holy Synod of February 25, 2009, the first Sunday after the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos was dedicated to Romanian migrants, as a sign of the permanent pastoral care of the Romanian Orthodox Church towards Romanians permanently or temporarily settled abroad.

As a spiritual mother who never abandons her sons and daughters, we assure them that the Romanian Orthodox Church will continue to be by their side through worthy hierarchs and missionary priests in the diaspora, supporting them both through her constant prayers and her concrete pastoral, social-philanthropic and cultural activities.

Moreover, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church declared 2021 as a Commemorative Year of the reposed in the Lord; the liturgical and cultural value of cemeteries.

The commemoration in the Church of those reposed in the Lord is an act of Orthodox faith and a testimony of love for others.

To honour their memory, the Orthodox Church keeps a wide range of services and memorial services (panikhidas) that include prayers and petitions to forgive their sins, for the rest and salvation of their souls.

Cemeteries, of course, have a liturgical significance, but also a cultural value. They are the expression of respect and pious remembrance for the forerunners.

The time directed by the faithful towards the Universal Resurrection is also

expressed through the permanent commemoration of those asleep in the Lord, including our Romanian nation's heroes.

The remembrance of heroes of all times and places and the mortuary cult, in general, are manifestations of steadfastness in faith, continuity and unity in thought and feelings over generations.

It is our sign of remembrance and appreciation for their sacrifice and the hope of their eternal communion with Christ the Lord, in the hope of the resurrection and eternal life.

The history of the Romanian Orthodox Church bears witness over the centuries to the care it had for its forerunners' memory.

At every Holy and Divine Liturgy are remembered the hierarchs of the Church, the founders, stewards and benefactors of the holy places, the heroes, soldiers and the Romanian fighters of all times and places who sacrificed themselves on the battlefields, in camps and prisons, to defend the ancestral Orthodox faith, for the unification of the nation, for the freedom, unity and dignity of the Romanian people, as well as all our kins who reposed.

We pray to the Most Compassionate God to bless all Romanians at home and abroad, giving them good health and salvation, protecting them from all evil and strengthening them in all good things, for the joy of our Church and the Romanian people everywhere, and to number those asleep in the Lord among the choirs of the righteous and to give them rest in the light and love of the Most Holy Trinity.

† Daniel

Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church

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