

## Monastery reestablished more than 230 years after being abolished by Habsburg Monarchy



Solca Monastery in the heart of Bukovina was abolished by the Habsburg Monarchy 236 years ago. It then functioned as a parish until this past Sunday, when it was festively reestablished as a monastery.

The monastery was re-established at the initiative of His Eminence Archbishop Calinic, who announced his desire just a few days after his enthronement as the Archbishop of Suceava and Rădăuți. At the same time, a new parish was opened for the faithful of Solca.

“One of the many wounds of Bukovina is closing right before our eyes,” Archimandrite Melchisedec Velnic, the Archdiocesan Exarch of monasteries and abbot of Putna Monastery, joyfully exclaimed, recalling that Solca was just one of the 21 monasteries and hermitages closed by the Habsburg Monarchy after it occupied Bukovina in 1775.

In November 2020, the Archdiocese acquired a plot of land adjacent to the monastery that had been separated from the monastery over time. Putna Monastery was entrusted with the foundation of a new monastic community and

the necessary reconstruction work.

The new abbot, Protosinghel Elefterie Ionesie, also comes from the authoritative Putna Monastery.



### **Abbot and parish priest installed in Solca**

Also at the end of the service, the Dean of Rădăuți, Fr. Ionel Maloș, presented to the faithful from Solca their new parish priest, Fr. Sergiu Chioartă.

The new parish priest explained the relationship between the parish and the monastery, which currently share the same place of worship.

"After 236 years of waiting, Solca Monastery has the due attention and was re-established to its honour. Father Elefterie will henceforth be our spiritual father. He will settle here. We will find him constantly praying for us and working hard to rebuild the monastery."

"But he will not struggle alone, because we will all come to him and support him. Blessed is the Christian who visits the monasteries and helps according to their possibilities! Let's do the same!"



### **Solca will have a cathedral**

In parallel with the reopening of the monastery, Solca also wants to build a cathedral for the city.

Until they have a cathedral, but also after that, Elder Elefterie assured the faithful that the monastery will be open to them:

"I know that this church is your soul church. It is the church in which you, your ancestors were baptized, crowned, buried when they passed to the Lord. I assure you that, even when Solca has a cathedral of its own, this soul church will remain open to any request from you."



Solca Monastery, dedicated to Sts. Peter and Paul, was founded by Moldavian Prince Ștefan Tomșa II in 1612, with the church being consecrated in 1614. After that, the construction of the other buildings continued until 1622.

After the flowering of the early period, another important period in the life of the monastery was the second half of the 18th century, especially during the abbacy of Archimandrite Vartolomei Mazereanu, from 1768 to 1774, who developed close relations with Putna Monastery.

Fr. Vartolomei renewed the monastery and endowed it with liturgical utensils, vestments, and service books. He also wrote and translated texts on monasticism and the history of Moldova.

Bukovina was then occupied by the Habsburg Monarchy and the monastery was closed. Of the 17 resident monks, only one very elderly monk was allowed to remain at the monastery. The church was converted into a parish and the other buildings were used for non-Church purposes.

The refectory and cells were destroyed in a fire in 1871, and the monastery was demolished during WWI.

Photography courtesy of Marius Cârneașă, Iosif Andronic

[Basilica.ro](http://Basilica.ro)

