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## **Archbishop Irineu at Aiud: The blood of those unjustly imprisoned cries out to us to stop looking for a comfortable life**



The sufferings and the blood of those unjustly imprisoned call upon us, today, to stop looking for a comfortable life and to begin to seek first the Kingdom of God, as Christ urges us. They did this standing steadfast in front of the storm and confessing the truth, like giants of Romanian spirituality, who arouse the admiration of generations,” Archbishop Irineu of Alba Iulia said during a visit to Aiud Monastery on Tuesday.

The Archbishop visited the monastic settlement on the Anti-Communist Political Prisoners’ Day, March 9, 2021.

At the Aiud Prison, also known as “Zarca of Aiud”, hundreds of people died during the communist regime. They died as a result of unsanitary conditions, beatings and torture.

During the meeting with the monastic community at Aiud, the Archbishop of Alba Iulia evoked the memory of the martyrs at Aiud Prison, a place sprinkled by the sacrifice that the defenders of Orthodoxy offered to the Romanian people during the atheist communist regime.

“The confessors of the communist jails represent for us authentic models of Christian and ethnic virtue, to whom we can look with confidence and veneration.”

“Father Justin Pârvu rightly said, “There were great fighters and heroes in our political prisons. There was concentrated, at a certain moment, everything that this nation had best».”

In Aiud, a place of imprisonment and extermination, the communists buried the Romanian resistance elite in the cemetery called by the locals “Râpa Robilor” (the ravine of slaves).

In 1992, the few survivors of the communist prisons decided to erect a monument in this place, symbolising the victory of Christ and the Christian-Orthodox faith. The building was completed in 1999, and a year later the Holy Table inside the monument was consecrated.

The service was officiated by Archbishop Bartolomeu of Vad, Feleac and Cluj, who had been imprisoned in Aiud.

In 2001, Father Justin Pârvu, abbot of the Petru Vodă Monastery, returned to Aiud, at “Râpa Robilor”, for the first time since his release in 1964. He set up a Hermitage here dedicated to the Holy Cross’s Exaltation, where all the martyrs of the Romanian nation would be remembered.

Following the decision of the Assembly of Bishops of the Metropolis of Transylvania on October 12, 2020, at the proposal of Archbishop Irineu, the monastic settlement of Aiud was elevated to the rank of Monastery.

Photography courtesy of the Archdiocese of Alba Iulia

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# Saint Joseph the Hesychast

