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BESSARABIAN HIEROMARTYR KILLED BY SOVIETS TO BE CANONIZED IN 2025



Yet another name of the 20th-century martyrs and confessors to be canonized by the Romanian Holy Synod in 2025 has been revealed.

In February 2021, the Romanian Synod announced that it intends to canonize in 2025 a dozen elders and confessors who suffered under communism to mark the 140th anniversary of autocephaly and the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Patriarchate.

At its session on July 28, the Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church's Metropolitan of Bessarabia announced that the hieromartyr Alexandru Baltăga is among those to be canonized.

Fr. Alexandru, who fervently supported the union of Bessarabia and Romania against the Soviet Union, died in a Russian prison camp in 1941.

The names of several other martyrs and confessors to be canonized in 2025 have been revealed: Elder Cleopa (Ilie), Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Elder Gherasim (Iscu), Elder Paisie (Olaru), Elder Dionisie (Ignat), Protosyncellus Fr. Calistrat (Bobu), Fr. Ilarion Felea, Elder Dometie (Manolache), Serafim (Popescu), Fr. Liviu Galaction

Munteanu, and Fr. Visarion (Toia).

Fr. Alexandru was born on April 14, 1861, the son of a priest.

He graduated from the Chișinău Seminary in 1883, and was sent to lead the parish community of the Church of St. Alexander Nevsky in Călăraşi-sat in modern-day Moldova. There he was ordained to the diaconate in 1886 and the priesthood a decade later.

He raised two adopted children.

Fr. Alexandru was the only cleric in the Country Council when the union of Bessarabia and Romania was voted on in 1917-1918, and he was later appointed a member of the Committee for the Unification of the Churches of Greater Romania.

He was arrested soon after the Soviet Union annexed Bessarabia in June 1940. During his interrogation, he readily admitted that he voted for the separation of Bessarabia from Russia and its union with Romania and that he opposed the Bolshevik Revolution.

He also expressed discontent that services had to be celebrated in Slavonic in Bessarabia, rather than their native Moldovan language. In June 1941, he was sent to prison in Kazan, where he died on August 7, 1941, at the age of 80.

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