

## **International Orthodox Youth Day: The Church is more dynamic through its young people**



On International Orthodox Youth Day, marked annually on February, 2, we recall a recent message from Patriarch Daniel, who said the presence of young people in the Church must be active and dynamic. We also recall some examples of actions in the service of the neighbour carried out by youth organisations in the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Last year, at the “Youth in Action!” volunteers’ gala, Patriarch Daniel spoke about the involvement of young Orthodox in the Church’s philanthropic actions or in their own initiatives to help others.

His Beatitude quoted from the first epistle of St. John, which says: “Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” (1 John 3:18) and mentioned St. Peter’s call to serve our neighbour: “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10).

“Here, dear young people, love of neighbour must not remain only at the declarative level, but must be materialised in the assumed and responsible help of those in need. Therefore, we become active and responsible members of the Church, through compassionate love of neighbour”, the Patriarch of Romania said.

“This is why the name of the Archdiocese of Bucharest’s Volunteer Group, Youth in Action, shows that your presence – and that of young people in general – in the Church must not only be meditative, but also active, full of dynamism, showing both the vigour of youth and the awareness of a living, active membership in the ecclesial community.”

Orthodox student organisations are involved in many such philanthropic projects.

Some examples:

ASCOR Iași built four houses for needy families;

ASCOR Bacău was involved in building a house for a large family;

The Association of Orthodox Youth in Banat Highlands (ATOR-BM) has initiated and developed a whole programme of social camps for almost 800 needy children in the region, and in December it is providing winter boots to almost 2000 children. Marked annually on February, 2, International Orthodox Youth Day was established in June 1992 at the 14th General Assembly of Syndesmos – World Organisation of Orthodox Youth.

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