

Patriarch Daniel's practical advice inspired by the Gospel: About food waste, environmental protection, crowd discipline



His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel attended the Divine Liturgy at Pasărea Monastery in Ilfov County on Sunday and addressed the faithful, stressing the need to prioritise spiritual things over material ones.

Referring to the Sunday's Gospel reading about the multiplication of the loaves and two fish, His Beatitude emphasised that the Saviour preached to the crowds, healed the sick and only at the end fed the people.

This happens today at the Divine Liturgy, where the faithful partake of the Eucharist on an empty stomach, and only at the end is the antidoron distributed to everyone.

“First, man is a spiritual, rational being endowed with will and feeling. Therefore, he must first feed himself with the spiritual meanings from the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Mysteries of the Church. After that, the body is also nourished,” Patriarch Daniel said on July 30.

The Patriarch highlighted the subtlety of the miraculous act done by Christ the Redeemer at the multiplication of the loaves: “No one saw large piles of bread, nor large piles of fish.”

Jesus Christ blessed the five loaves and two fish from a young man’s bag, and through the blessing, the disciples fed in a real, not illusory, way more than five thousand people and 12 baskets of crumbs remained.

“The loaves and fish multiplied as they were distributed,” explained His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel, recalling the words of Father Nicolae Steinhardt: “By giving, you will receive.”

“The Saviour Jesus Christ does not forget that man also has a body. First, he nurtured the soul by preaching the Gospel of eternal life. He healed the sick and commanded His disciples to feed the hungry.”

“The Gospel shows us that the spiritual work of the Church must be accompanied by social, philanthropic or charitable work,” the Patriarch of Romania noted, explaining that Christians developed philanthropy together with the Liturgy from the first centuries.

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Patriarch Daniel concluded his sermon by highlighting some practical, current and valuable aspects for society that emerge from the multiplication of loaves and fish.

“We also learn from today’s Gospel something efficient: Where five thousand men ate, apart from women and children, as the Gospel relates, many crumbs remained, as sometimes happens when picnics and barbecues are made. And not everyone collects scraps. But the Saviour Jesus Christ taught His disciples to avoid waste, and what remained was collected in baskets to be reused.”

“So, the Savior teaches us to be thrifty, not wasteful,” the Patriarch of Romania noted.

“Also, the Saviour Jesus Christ teaches us that the natural place, on the grass, where the miracle took place, and the crowds were fed, must be left clean. So, let us not pollute the beautiful green grass and leave no waste after using God’s blessed nature.”

“Of course, it also teaches us discipline in the Church. Let people refrain from barging in when they receive something (...) We see in today’s Gospel that people did not crowd together, did not step on each other’s feet, did not take offence, but

with good order received the gift from God and what remained was gathered so that others may be helped and that it may be a clean place for the glory of God and our salvation. Amen.”



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