

## **On World Social Media Day, Patriarch Daniel urges freedom and responsibility in digital communication**



His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel sent a message on World Social Media Day urging freedom and responsibility in digital communication.

Patriarch Daniel's Message on World Social Media Day: full text

Various online campaigns are being organized on June 30 to mark the World Social Media Day, platforms that are increasingly registering new users including in Romania.

Although for today's man every day can be considered Social Media Day by accessing social media platforms to communicate with friends and relatives, to get informed about society's progress or for other reasons, June 30 is an opportunity to raise awareness on the impact social media has on our lives, especially on our relation with our peers and with God, with our inner life and the outside nature.

More than ever, in the present time of instantaneous communication, the flow of

various information, artificial illuminated screens, the need for the cultivation of digital discernment is needed, and the Church is called upon to guide the believers in this respect.

Being faithful to the missionary zeal of the Holy Apostles and Holy Fathers to transmit God's love for humans, our Church will use social platforms with wisdom (courage and caution) to communicate with today's man.

In this respect, the Romanian Orthodox Church is not absent on these networks, most of the dioceses, parishes and monasteries in the Romanian Patriarchate having Facebook pages, as well as emerging accounts on other social networks.

In addition, social media started to be used even more often by priests to carry out their pastoral ministry, especially in the Romanian Diaspora.

However, the use of these networks in missionary work involves ecclesiastical responsibility and pastoral wisdom, because although new technology offers new possibilities for development, it can also bring new challenges or dangers to the preservation of traditional spiritual, cultural and social values of people and nations.

The multitude of individual ideas and opinions expressed freely in the virtual space must always be subjected to a critical and selective analysis, according to the permanent values of Christian faith and morals.

In this sense, our Saviour Jesus Christ cautions us that 'everyone will have to give account on the day of judgement for every empty word they have spoken' (Matthew 12:36).

Apostle Peter admonishes us, 'Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil' (1 Peter 2:16).

At the same time, Saint Paul gives us the advice that 'I have the right to do anything,'—but not everything is beneficial' (1 Corinthians 6:12).

Today, more than ever, it is necessary to be aware that social networks consume the most valuable resource of life – time – which is the gift of God for the salvation of mankind, that is, for the acquisition of eternal life.

The time of the present life must be capitalized in order to cultivate love for God through prayer and for our neighbours through good deeds in order to gain the communion of eternal love and life in the Kingdom of the Most Holy Trinity.

In addition, the concrete, not virtual, relationship with individuals and with the

surrounding nature is a source of health and joy for the human soul and body, in the family and in society.

In conclusion, we urge all our priests and believers to use the social networks in their personal lives as well as in pastoral, missionary or professional activities, but to give more time to real (not virtual) communion with their family, with the parish and the beauties of nature.

† Daniel

Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church

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