

SOLIA

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**PASTORAL LETTER
OF HIS EMINENCE
ARCHBISHOP
NATHANIEL**

*Beloved Spiritual Children
in Christ,*

Reverend Clergy, Devout Faithful, and Venerable Monastics of our God-protected Episcopate:

May God our Father and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ bestow on you His grace and peace, and from us, hierarchal blessings!

"After that, He appeared to more than five hundred brothers at once, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep." (1 Corinthians 15:6)

Dearly Beloved
in our Risen Lord:

**Christ is risen!
Truly, He is risen!**

This year, 2025, Orthodox Christians commemorate and celebrate the 1,700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council held in the year 325 in Nicaea at which the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ was confirmed as a matter of faith which through the ages Orthodox Christians had



been confessing as the basis of belief in Jesus Christ as Redeemer of humankind.

We proclaim Christ's divinity. We confess that He suffered crucifixion, died, and was buried and that on the third day, He arose from the grave. According to Holy Scripture, His resurrection was witnessed by the Ointment-bearing Women, the Apostles, and by 500 "brothers" in the apostolic faith.

The Apostle Paul testifies in his First Letter to the Corinthians that there were "500 Brothers" who saw the resurrected Christ. Paul personally had the opportunity to know some of these 500, for he states "...some are still alive..." meaning he has met some of them, those "Brothers in the faith!"

Recently, in the earliest discov-

ered house-church, intact mosaic floor tablets were revealed, on which was spelled out the testimony: “Jesus Christ is God!” These mosaics are more than a hundred years older than the Council of Nicaea. The ancient tiles offer a compelling witness to the evidence of the apostolic faith in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, as confessed by those 500 Brothers, by the rest of the earliest Christian assemblies, and by us today.

What does resurrection mean? It is a “new birth,” the Apostle Peter tells us in his First Letter. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy, He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”* (1 Peter 1:3).

Saint John of Damascus enlightens us with his words, stating, *“We believe also in the resurrection of the dead. For there will be in truth a resurrection of the dead, and by resurrection we mean resurrection of bodies.”* [Exposition of the Orthodox Faith Bk 4, Ch 27]

The resurrection of Christ our Lord is a promise to all mankind, as Saint Theophilus of Antioch reminds us: *“God will raise your flesh immortal with your soul, and then, having be-*

come immortal, you will see the Immortal, if you now believe on Him.” [Saint Theophilus of Antioch to Autolycus, Bk. 1, Ch 7. Mg 6, 1036]

What is this “living hope,” the gift of resurrection to all, of which Saint Peter wrote? Saint Theophilus continues to enlighten us, stating: *“To those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek immortality, He (God) will give life everlasting, peace, rest, and abundance of good things, which neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive.”* [(1 Cor 2:9) To Autolycus, Ch 1:14 MG 6,1045]

Be reminded that in the Creed, we do confess, “I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come.” In other words, we believe and confirm that the resurrection will come to be for all humanity and that there is a new life to come.

This is why today we celebrate Christ’s resurrection from the grave, and by faith, we anticipate our own hope of eternal life, as Saint Cyril of Jerusalem reminds us: *“The root of all good works is the hope of the resurrection.”* [Catechesis No. 18:1 MG 23:329]

So, Beloved, let us, by our lives, our good works, our hope in eternal life with God, and our

constant confession of His divinity and resurrection, live in that hope. Let us today glorify our Savior, Jesus Christ, who is risen from the grave. Let us boldly proclaim to the anxious world,

**Christ is risen!
Truly, He is risen!**

Accept our fatherly love and archpastoral blessings on those near and far away.

† **NATHANIEL**

By the Mercy of God,

*Archbishop of Detroit
and The Romanian Orthodox
Episcopate of America and
Canada
Orthodox Church in America*



PASTORALA ÎNALTPREASFINȚITULUI PĂRINTE ARHIEPISCOP NATHANIEL

*Iubiți fii duhovnicești,
Cinstitului nostru cler, cinului
monahal și binecredincioșilor
creștini ai Sfintei noastre
Episcopii:*

Harul și pace de la Dumnezeu Tatăl și de la Domnul nostru Iisus Hristos, iar de la noi părintească binecuvântare!

"În urmă S-a arătat deodată la peste cinci sute de frați, dintre care cei mai mulți trăiesc până astăzi, iar unii au și adormit."(1 Corinteni 15:6)

Iubiți credincioși
întru Hristos Iisus Cel Înviat:

**Hristos a înviat!
Adevărat a înviat!**

Anul acesta, 2025, creștinii ortodocși comemorează și prăznuiesc 1700 de ani de la primul Sinod Ecumenic, desfășurat în anul 325 la Niceea, unde a fost mărturisită și confirmată dumnezeirea Domnului nostru Iisus Hristos, adevăr de credință pe care creștinii ortodocși l-au păstrat neschimbat ca temei al mântuirii neamului omenesc.

Vestim dumnezeirea lui Hristos. Mărturisim că El a fost răstignit, a murit și a fost îngropat și că, a treia zi, a înviat din morți. Scriptura ne încredințează că Învierea Sa a fost văzută de Sfintele Femei Mironosițe, de Sfinții Apostoli și de către 500 de 'frați' în

crediința cea apostolească.

Sfântul Apostol Pavel adeverește în prima sa Epistolă către Corinteni că Mântuitorul Cel Înviat a fost văzut de „500 de frați”, dintre care mulți erau încă în viață la vremea scrierii epistolei. Apostolul însuși îi cunoscuse pe unii dintre acești martori ai Învierii, întărindu-ne astfel credința în acest eveniment mântuitor.

Recent, în cea mai veche biserică descoperită, s-au găsit mozaicuri intacte pe care era scris: „Iisus Hristos este Dumnezeu!” Aceste mărturii sunt cu peste o sută de ani mai vechi decât Sinodul de la Niceea și dovedesc fără echivoc că primii creștini aveau conștiința apostolică a Învierii Domnului, asemenea celor 500 de frați mărturisitori, asemenea primelor comunități creștine și asemenea nouă, celor de astăzi.

Ce înseamnă Învierea? Sfântul Apostol Petru ne spune că este o „naștere din nou”: „*Binecuvântat fie Dumnezeu și Tatăl Domnului nostru Iisus Hristos, Care, după mare mila Sa, prin învierea lui Iisus Hristos din morți, ne-a născut din nou, spre nădejde vie.*” (1 Petru 1:3)

Sfântul Ioan Damaschin, prin cuvintele sale pline de înțelepciune, ne descoperă: „*De asemenea credem în învierea morților. Căci va fi cu adevărat*



o înviere a morților, și prin înviere înțelegem învierea trupurilor.” (Expunerea Credinței Ortodoxe, Cartea 4, Cap. 27)

Învierea Domnului este o făgăduință pentru noi, toți oamenii, așa cum ne amintește Sfântul Teofil al Antiohiei: „*Dumnezeu va învia trupul tău, nemuritor împreună cu sufletul tău, și atunci, devenit nemuritor, vei vedea pe Cel Nemuritor, dacă crezi acum în El.*” (Către Autolic, Cartea 1, Cap. 7)

Ce este această „nădejde vie”, darul Învierii pentru toți, despre care scrie Sfântul Petru? Sfântul Teofil ne lămurește mai departe: „*Celor care, prin răbdare în faptele bune, caută nemurirea, Dumnezeu le va dăruia viață veșnică, pace, odihnă și belșug de bunătați, pe care nici ochiul nu le-a văzut, nici*

urechea nu le-a auzit și la inima omului nu s-au suit.” (1 Corinteni 2,9; Către Autolic, Cartea 1, Cap. 14)

Să ne amintim că în Crez mărturisim drept și cu adevărat: „Aștept învierea morților și viața veacului ce va să fie.” Cu alte cuvinte, credem și mărturisim că învierea va veni pentru toată omenirea și că viața veșnică ne așteaptă.

De aceea, astăzi prăznuim Învierea lui Hristos din mormânt și, prin credință, așteptăm cu nădejde propria noastră înviere și viața veșnică. Sfântul Chiril al Ierusalimului ne întârește în această credință, spunând: „*Rădăcina tuturor faptelor bune este nădejdea învierii.*” (Cateheza 18,1)

Așadar, iubiților, prin viața noastră, prin faptele noastre bune, prin nădejdea noastră în

viața veșnică împreună cu Dumnezeu și prin mărturisirea neîncetată a dumnezeirii și a Învierii Sale, să trăim în această nădejde. Astăzi, să-L slăvim pe Mântuitorul nostru, Iisus Hristos, Cel înviat din morți! Să vestim cu îndrăzneală lumii frământate de griji:

Hristos a înviat! Adevărat a înviat!

Primiți dragostea noastră părintească și binecuvântările noastre arhieresti pentru cei de lângă noi și cei de departe.

† NATHANIEL

Prin mila lui Dumnezeu,
*Arhiepiscop de Detroit
și al Episcopiei Ortodoxe
Române din America și Canada
Biserica Ortodoxă din America*



ÎNVĂȚĂTURILE SFINȚILOR PĂRIȚI

Să întoarceți orice necaz către cunoașterea lui Hristos, către iubirea Lui, către slăvirea Lui. Iar Hristos, Care așteaptă totdeauna cu ardoare să ne ajute, vă va da harul și puterea Sa, și va preface necazul în bucurie, în iubire pentru frați, în adorare către El Însuși. Așa va fugi întunericul. Să vă amintiți de Apostolul Pavel. Ce spunea? Acum mă bucur în pătimirile mele (Col. 1, 24).

Sufletul vostru să se dăruiască rugăciunii „Doamne Iisuse Hristoase, miluiește-mă” pentru toate neliniștile voastre, pentru toate și pentru toți. Nu priviți la ceea ce vi se întâmplă, ci la lumină, la Hristos, așa precum pruncul privește către mama atunci când i se întâmplă ceva. Să le vedeți pe toate fără frământare, fără strâmtorare, fără apăsare. Nu este nevoie să vă străduiți și să vă forțați. Întreaga voastră strădanie să



fie să priviți spre lumină, să cuceriți lumina. Astfel, în loc să vă predați strâmtorării, care nu este a Duhului lui Dumnezeu, vă veți preda slavoslovirii lui Dumnezeu.

Pe toate să le înfrunțați cu iubire, cu bunătate, cu răbdare și cu smerenie. Să fiți stânci. Toate să se spargă deasupra voastră și să se întoarcă înapoi precum valurile, iar voi să rămâneți netulburați.

„(Ne vorbește Părintele Porfirie - Viața și Cuvintele, Editura Egumenița, 2003.)



HONORING THE MEMORY OF ARCHIMANDRITE ROMAN BRAGA

A DECADE SINCE HIS FALLING ASLEEP IN THE LORD

On the occasion of 10 years since the repose of Archimandrite Roman Braga, a memorial conference entitled “*Honoring the Memory of Father Roman Braga*” was held on Friday and Saturday, May 2–3, 2025, at the Dormition of the Mother of God Monastery in Rives Junction, Michigan.

The event began with the celebration of the Vespers service, in the presence of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington and Metropolitan of All America

and Canada; His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America; His Eminence Archbishop Daniel of Chicago and the Diocese of the Midwest; and His Grace Bishop Andrei of Cleveland, Auxiliary-Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. The service was attended by numerous clergy, monastics, and faithful who shared a spiritual bond with Father Roman Braga.

Following Vespers, the *Akathist Hymn to the Mother*

of God – *The Burning Bush* was offered—a work of rare theological beauty and spiritual depth, born of suffering and prayer during the time of the spiritual movement known as “Rugul Aprins” (The Burning Bush). This movement (also known as the Group of Antim Monastery) was an association of Christian intellectuals with both a deeply spiritual and cultural-literary identity, active between 1945 and 1958. Formed in the immediate post-war period, it operated under the guidance of remarkable monastic and theological figures during the rise of the communist regime established in 1947. Among its prominent members was Father Roman Braga himself.

The faithful then gathered in the monastery’s conference hall, where the Abbess, Rev. Mother Gabriella Ursache, offered a welcoming address and spoke about the spiritual legacy of Father Roman. Presentations followed by Archim. Joseph Morris, abbot of St. Gregory Palamas Orthodox Monastery in Perrysville, Ohio, and by Mother Christophora, abbess of the Transfiguration Monastery in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania—both spiritual disciples of Father Roman Braga. Their heartfelt testimonies



Painted a tender portrait of a luminous spiritual father, marked by profound humility, simplicity, and sacrificial love for Christ and His Church.

On Saturday morning, the Holy and Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the monastery church, presided over by His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon of all America and Canada, together with Archbishops Nathaniel and Daniel and Bishop Andrei. Assisting them at the Divine Liturgy were visiting clergy. Following the Liturgy, a Memorial Service (Parastas) was held at the grave of Father Roman Braga, located in the monastery’s cemetery.

That same afternoon, the memorial conference resumed

with an address by His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel, who emotionally recalled the radiant figure of Father Roman, emphasizing his gentleness, wisdom, and formative role in the spiritual life of the faithful in North America. His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon then spoke on the importance of prayer in the Christian life, pointing to Father Roman as a living example of one who embodied the prayer of the heart and the sanctifying silence of the desert. His Eminence Archbishop Daniel reflected on the future of Orthodoxy in North America, highlighting Father Roman's contribution to pan-Orthodox unity and the preservation of an authentic Ortho-

dox ethos within a pluralistic society.

The conference concluded with a heartfelt testimony from Father John Konkle, also a disciple of Father Roman Braga, who offered words of gratitude and witness to the spiritual impact the elder had on his own theological and spiritual formation.

Through these liturgical and academic gatherings, Archimandrite Roman Braga was honored with deep gratitude, and his memory continues to live on in the hearts of all those who knew him and followed his guidance toward the Kingdom of God.



CEL DE-AL 77 LEA CONGRES A.R.F.O.R.A. A AVUT LOC ÎN ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA



În perioada 30 mai – 1 iunie 2025, la Biserica Ortodoxă Română „Sfânta Maria” din St. Paul, Minnesota, s-a desfășurat al 77-lea Congres Anual ARFORA în prezența și cu binecuvântarea Înaltpreasfințitului Părinte Arhiepiscop Nathaniel.

Delegat din Statele Unite, alături de părintele Spiritual, PC. Pr. Sabin Pop, s-au reunit pentru a continua misiunea ARFORA de întărire a credinței ortodoxe, susținere a vieții parohiale și promovare a comuniunii creștine între femeile din Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America.

Programul a inclus ședințele Consiliului Executiv și ale Congresului General, alegerea și depunerea jurământului noilor membre ale consiliului, precum și o Slujbă de Pomenire

(Parastas) în memoria fostelor președinte și a membrilor trecute la Domnul.

Un moment important al evenimentului a fost conferința susținută de dna Ann Woods, coordonatoare de programe la FOCUS Minnesota și membră a Bisericii Ortodoxe Grecești „Sfântul Gheorghe” din St. Paul. Cu studii în teologie și specializare în etică ecologică, Ann Woods a prezentat o reflecție asupra relației spirituale dintre om și creația lui Dumnezeu, inspirându-se din scrierile Sfinților Părinți. Ea a explorat tema „Creația lui Dumnezeu are grijă de noi”, inspirându-se din învățăturile Părinților Deșertului și ale Maicilor (Ammelor) Deșertului. Woods a subliniat puterea vindecătoare a naturii, explicând rolul acesteia în combaterea stresului, depresiei și a problemelor de somn – și a criticat dependența modernă de



tehnologie. „Copiii de astăzi petrec prea puțin timp în natură, iar telefoanele le împiedică dezvoltarea,” a remarcat aceasta. „Reconectarea cu Creația nu este doar bună pentru suflet – este esențială pentru creșterea noastră mentală și spirituală.”

ARFORA a fost fondată oficial în anul 1938, sub îndrumarea Preasfințitului Părinte Policarp, fiind cea mai veche organizație auxiliară din cadrul Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române din America. Totuși, rădăcinile sale se întorc până în 1902, când femeile românce din primele parohii ortodoxe din America de Nord s-au organizat pentru a susține viața liturgică și administrativă a bisericilor.

De-a lungul veacurilor, ARFORA și-a extins misiunea,

susținând educația religioasă a tinerilor, organizând întâlniri spirituale anuale pentru femei (începând cu anul 1967), și implicându-se activ în acțiuni caritabile pe întreg cuprinsul Americii de Nord. Constituția organizației a fost revizuită în mod semnificativ în anii 1955, 1971 și 1988, pentru a răspunde mai bine nevoilor comunităților ortodoxe contemporane.

Sesiunea de Sâmbătă s-a încheiat cu slujba Vecerniei și cu ceremonia de depunere a jurământului a noilor membre ale consiliului director, reafirmând angajamentul ARFORA față de credință, slujire și unitate în viața Bisericii Ortodoxe din America de Nord.

Congresul s-a încheiat Duminică, 1 Iunie, închinată Sfinților Părinți de la Sinodul I Ecume-

nic, prin oficierea Sfintei și Dumnezeieștii Liturghii, săvârșită de Înaltpreasfințitul Părinte Arhiepiscop Nathaniel, înconjurat de un sobor de preoți și diaconi.

Evenimentul s-a realizat cu sprijinul PC. Pr. Mircea VasIU, paroh al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române „Adromirea Maicii Domnului” din St. Paul și Asociației parohiale ARFORA Condușă de dna Prascovia Bortnova.

Consiliul Director ARFORA ales pentru mandatul 2025–2027 este următorul:

Președinte: Ioana Mihăilescu

Vicepreședinte:

Psa. Daniela Nemeș

Secretar: Denisa Ilea

Trezorier: Lucy Pop

Cenzori: Denisa Ilea și

Cornelia Merchant

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Burse: Prascovia Bortnova



GROWING IN GOD: PURIFICATION, ILLUMINATION, AND PERFECTION

By Father Roman Braga
Part II

Mary Brown: *Being illumined means understanding the purpose of our actions and of God's actions?*

Fr. Roman: Exactly. For example, St Maximus was placed in the illumination stage in his contemplations of the reasons of God in three realms: in history, in the Bible, and in nature. Illumination is also seeing meanings in the Bible, for example, that Daniel was a type of Jesus Christ, as were Noah, Joseph, and David. People in the Bible did not just happen to live and die, they represent something. We also represent something. God did not create us at random. History and all the political events that happen have a reason why God allows them. Our obligation is to discern and to draw a lesson and a conclusion for ourselves. All that happens is for us, for our understanding, for our perfection, for our enrichment, or for our discipline and correction.



M.B. *Could illumination involve seeing a deeper purpose in life? We are not merely to exist, but we are to understand that everything that happens in our lives, and everything we perceive with our purpose.*

Fr. R. At first people are engrossed in material things. They do not perceive God in Scripture, in nature, or in historical events. But the person who reads a little or is educated spiritually, starts to purify himself. School and information should

contribute to our purification. The education received in school should never teach us to use our senses in a wrong way or to commit abuses. Thus, education also contributes to our purification, not only the Church.

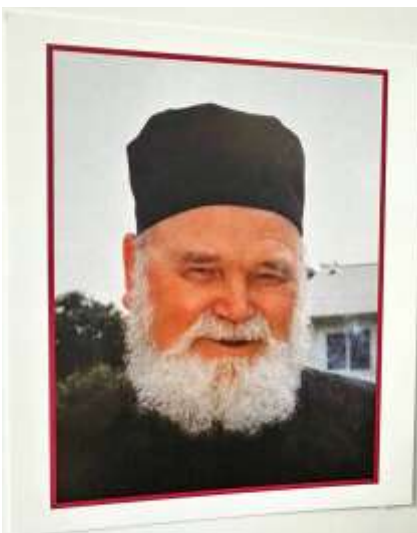
The role of the Church is to alert us of danger. Being a person who wants to become eternal, it is very dangerous to exist in what the Church calls sin. The Church tells us "It is sinful for you to do this or that" because the Church has experience, and the Church is part of society. If something is wrong for God, it is also wrong for society. For example, people are to get married and not make

themselves impure by cohabitation and by having children outside of marriage. The Church calls that a sin, and this sinful lifestyle also creates many problems for society.

M.B. It seems that part of our purification and illumination is accepting the wisdom of the Church and living according to it.

Fr. R. The reasoning process of a sinful man is darkened. When controlled by drugs or alcohol or other addictions, it is impossible for logic or reason to tell us what to do. Even when we know something is wrong, because of our passions we still do it. So, the Church tells us what the sins are, and, in fact, these sins are dangerous for the entire human society.

The Church is the deposit of sacred things and imparts spiritual power to us from this deposit. She gives us the feasts of the Church year and the periods of fasting. With her sacraments, which are for our sanctification, she purifies us and helps us start again. The Holy Spirit works through the sacraments to give us power to abstain



from passions.

Because man's conscience is burdened by sin, the Church also purifies the conscience. When our conscience is heavy with sins, we come to Church, confess our sins, and receive absolution and a recommendation to forget about them. We do not deal with our sins in the way of the world, which says, "It is OK, you are not responsible." We are responsible, but we can confess our sins, receive absolution, and start again with new powers – not personal power but the power of the Holy Spirit working in us. No philosophy can give what the Church gives.

Until man dies, his inclination is always to burden his soul. We must not think purification is a permanent act. But this does not mean we do not progress towards illumination and perfection. We do progress, but we still have a human nature.

The third stage of our divinization is unity with God, or *perfection*.

(A chapter from the book: *Living as a Christian in a World that Rejects God: Conversations with Mary Brown*, Dormition Orthodox Monastery, Rives Junction, Michigan, 2024, pp. 57-65) Purchase at: dormitionmonasterygiftshop.squarespace.com



Pastoral Visits and Events

Strengthening Faith and Community



With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel, His Grace Bishop Andrei made a pastoral visit to the parish of The Holy Trinity in Miramar, Florida on Saturday, March 29, 2025. During the celebration of the Holy and Divine Liturgy, His Grace ordained the young theologian Nicolae Codita to the Holy Diaconate.



With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel, on the 4th Sunday of Great Lent, St. John Climacus (of the Ladder), March 30, 2025, His Grace Bishop Andrei made a pastoral visit to the parish of The Holy Cross in Hollywood, Florida. During the celebration of the Holy and Divine Liturgy, His Grace ordained Deacon Nicolae Codita to the Holy Priesthood.



His Grace Bishop Andrei traveled to Rome, Italy, to represent the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) at the funeral of Pope Francis, held on April 26, 2025, in Vatican City, as the official delegate of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, Primate of the Orthodox Church in America and Canada.



On the Second Sunday after Pascha, dedicated to Saint Thomas the Apostle, April 27, 2025, His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel made a pastoral visit to the city of Saint Louis, Missouri, where he visited the parish of St Thomas the Apostle, on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the parish's founding and the celebration of the church's patronal feast. Alongside His Eminence was His Grace Bishop Theophan of Philomelion, of the Albanian Orthodox Diocese of the Americas (Ecumenical Patriarchate).



With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel, on the Third Sunday of Pascha, Sunday of Myrrhbearers, May 4, 2025, His Grace Bishop Andrei made a pastoral visit to the parish of Nativity of the Ever-Virgin Mary Church (St. Mary) in Elmhurst, New York. During the celebration of the Holy and Divine Liturgy, His Grace ordained theologian Petru Teofil Sarca to the Holy Diaconate.

His Grace Bishop Andrei represented the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) at the official inauguration of Pope Leo XIV, serving as the delegate of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, Primate of the Orthodox Church in America and Canada. The historic ceremony, held on May 18, 2025 in Vatican City, brought together religious leaders and state officials from around the world to mark this significant occasion for the Roman Catholic Church.





Over Memorial Day Weekend, families from across the country gathered at the Vatra for a beautiful and long-standing tradition. As in years past, volunteers came together to clean and prepare the grounds and buildings for summer events – an act of devotion passed from generation to generation.



With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel, on Thursday, May 29, 2025, Feast of the Ascension of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, His Grace Bishop Andrei made a pastoral visit to the parish of the Nativity of the Ever-Virgin Mary in Elmhurst, New York. During the celebration of the Holy and Divine Liturgy, His Grace ordained Deacon Petru Teofil Sarca to the Holy Priesthood.



With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel, His Grace Bishop Andrei visited the parish of Ascension of the Lord and Saint Paracheva of Iași in Montreal, Quebec, Canada (May 31-June 1, 2025) for their 20th anniversary and patronal feast. After the Holy and Divine Liturgy, His Grace installed the new parish priest Rev. Fr. Cătălin Stoleru (successor to V. Rev. Protopresbyter Nicolae Stoleru, Ph.D.)



On June 5, 2025, His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel attended the annual meeting of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of Canada in Toronto, Ontario.



AROY RETURNS: NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2025

As announced at the 92nd Episcopate Congress, The American Romanian Orthodox Youth is being reactivated as an auxiliary organization of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. Our mission as the American Romanian Orthodox Youth is to form lifelong Disciples of Christ who strive to strengthen their connection to Him and His Church. Additionally, our Romanian culture and heritage is at the core of our identity, so strengthening the connection we have with it will be an integral part of our mission.

AROY will provide a community for young adults who are seeking their place in socie-

ty that will love them and help them find meaning in their life. Allowing them to develop authentic connections to one another, with Christ at the center, will be incredibly beneficial in their ability to navigate the world today. The importance of this is shown in the book of Proverbs; *As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another* (Proverbs 27:17) Additionally, as the Evangelist Matthew wrote; *Jesus taught that two commandments summarized all the law and the prophets: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind” and “love your neighbor as yourself”* (Matthew 22:34-40). It is our hope, that through

AROY, our young adults will follow this call by Christ himself to deepen their connection with Him, and love each and every one of their neighbors.

It is absolutely integral that we invest in the formation of our young adults as Orthodox Christians, because they have the ability and the drive to serve the Church in the present day. We hope, through AROY, to give our young adults the tools and education to take hold of their faith, do God's work and be Christ's living presence to all those around them.

In our work to begin re-activating AROY, we have hosted a few events for Young Adults in our Episcopate. The first of these was at the 92nd Episcopate Congress where we hosted an outing for the young adults present at the conference to a local bowling alley. This event allowed our young adults to connect with one another in a casual fellowship setting. Secondly, we hosted a Virtual Lenten Retreat with Fr. Paul Truebenbach, a well known priest who utilizes YouTube as a platform to spread and teach the Orthodox faith.

AROY will be hosting a National Conference on **October 10th - 12th, 2025**, in Detroit Michigan, in conjunction with Descent of the Holy Spirit Romanian Orthodox Church in Warren, Michigan. The primary

aims of this conference will be to strengthen the relationship that our young adults have with the church, through religious education sessions and service projects, and to one another through fellowship activities. The theme of this conference will be *Not of this World* (John 15:19), which will explore the contemporary culture we live in and how our young adults can navigate through it, with their faith as a guide.

This conference is a wonderful opportunity to bring together young adults from each of our parishes throughout the United States and Canada. These relationships and connections are so integral, especially in our world today. It is our hope that young adults (ages 18-30) from each parish in our Episcopate will attend the national conference.

We are looking forward to the future of AROY and giving our young adults a program specifically geared for their faith formation. Finally, we humbly ask you all to keep us young adults in your prayers and support us as we continue our work to reactivate this ministry of our Episcopate.

Christina Dager
AROY National Coordinator



CONVOCATION

In conformity with Article III, Section 7, of the By-Laws of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, we hereby call into session

THE 93rd ANNUAL EPISCOPATE CONGRESS

All Priests presently assigned to a parish and all Lay Delegates legally elected by their Parish Assembly in 2025, and whose credentials have been verified by the Chancery, are called into Session.

The Congress will be in session on

**Friday, September 5 at 9:00 am Central Time
at Holy Nativity Church, 2820 W Ardmore Ave,
Chicago, Illinois**

All clergy and lay delegates are requested to participate until the completion of the Congress.

Details regarding the procedure for joining the Congress meeting will be emailed to all parish clergy and delegates, along with the Report to the Congress and other pertinent materials.

The Agenda, as printed in the Annual Report to the Episcopate Congress 2025, will include: Reading/Approval of the 92nd Episcopate Congress Minutes; Official Reports to the Congress; Reports from the Episcopate Auxiliaries; New Business as submitted by the Episcopate Council.

As per Article III, Section 1, the Episcopate Congress shall be composed of: The Bishop, The Auxiliary Bishop(s), The Vicar, The Parish Priest and Assistant Priest(s), Two Lay Delegates

elected by each Parish Assembly for Congresses 2025-2026, Two delegates from each Auxiliary organization of the Episcopate, Priests under the jurisdiction of the Episcopate not having parishes; deacons, abbots, abbesses, if accredited by the Episcopate Council, Members of the Episcopate Council in office, including Auxiliary Presidents ex-officio. Should the duly-elected lay delegates be unable to attend, their alternates will represent the parish. No addition, substitution or *ad hoc* delegation will be recognized by the credentials committee.

† NATHANIEL
Archbishop of Detroit and The Romanian Orthodox
Episcopate of America

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

**Wednesday, September 3, 2025 –
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Rosemont, IL**

6:00-8:00 pm Early Registration –
Clergy

**Thursday, September 4, 2025 –
St. Athanasius the Great Church,
Aurora, IL – Clergy only**

10:00 am Divine Liturgy
12:00 pm Lunch for Clergy
1:00 pm Clergy Conference
5:00 pm Vespers / Akathist
6:00 pm Supper for Clergy

*(sponsored and organized by Central
States Deanery)*

Hyatt Regency Hotel, Rosemont, IL

6:00-8:00 pm Early Registration –
Lay Delegates

**Friday, September 5, 2025 – Holy
Nativity Church, Chicago, IL**

8:00 am Delegate Registration

ARFORA Coffee Shop (open until
5:00 pm)

9:00 am 93rd Episcopate Congress
Convenes – Session I

12:00 pm Lunch & Photo
2:00 pm Congress Session II

5:00 pm Memorial Service &
Vespers

7:00 pm Congress Banquet &
Program

**Saturday, September 6, 2025 – St.
Mary Church, Chicago, IL**

9:00 am Matins

10:00 am Hierarchal Divine Liturgy

12:30 pm Lunch

Free afternoon / sightseeing around
city

**Sunday, September 7, 2025 – Holy
Nativity Church, Chicago, IL**

9:00 am Matins

10:00 am Hierarchal Divine Liturgy
*combined with 4 Chicago area
parishes*

1:00 pm Picnic



2025 CONGRESUL EPISCOPIEI EPISCOPATE CONGRESS

HOTEL

2025 CONGRESUL EPISCOPIEI EPISCOPATE CONGRESS



9300 Bryn Mawr Ave, Rosemont IL 60018

\$135 / night + tax

1 KING or 2 DOUBLE BEDS

RESERVATIONS

(847) 696-1234 or online:

www.hyatt.com/en-US/group-booking/CHIRO/G-OAMF

- **Reservation Deadline: 13 AUGUST**
- Must mention: "Romanian Orthodox" / "ROEA"
- DISCOUNTED PARKING RATE available: \$15 daily
- Group rate honored 3 thru 8 September 2025 for guests wishing to extend their visit

**24/7 Complimentary
AIRPORT SHUTTLE
to & from ORD**



CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



PASTORAL CHANGES

ORDINATIONS

CODITA, Nicolae, was ordained by His Grace, Bishop ANDREI into the Holy Diaconate on March 29, 2025, at Holy Trinity Church, Miramar, FL, and into the Holy Priesthood on March 30, 2025, at Holy Cross Church, Hollywood, FL, and attached to Holy Cross Parish, Hollywood, FL.

SARCA, Petru, was ordained by His Grace, Bishop ANDREI into the Holy Diaconate on May 4, 2025, at St. Mary Church, Elmhurst, NY, and into the Holy Priesthood on May 29, 2025, at St. Mary Church, Elmhurst, NY, and attached to the St. Joseph of Maramures Parish, Hazleton, PA.

ASSIGNED/RECEIVED/ RELEASED

LIU, Rev. Deacon Kenneth, who was attached to Protection of the Holy Mother of God Parish, Falls

Church, VA, is assigned Deacon effective May 8, 2025.

STOLERU, Rev. Fr. Paul Catalin, who was attached to Ascension of the Lord Parish, Montreal, QC, is assigned Parish Priest effective June 1, 2025.

DEATHS

PAVEL, Protopresbyter Simion, who was retired, fell asleep in the Lord on April 24, 2025.

AWARDS

During the 2025 Spring Session of the Holy Synod, the following clergy received the Synodal Award of Archpriest: Reverend Fathers Gabriel Agoston, Rares Claudiu Onofrei, Marius Ionut Sandu, Mircea Vasuiu; and, *the following clergy received the Synodal Award of Protodeacon:* Reverend Deacons Nicolae B. Lapustea, Nicolae Marinescu, and Laike Misikir.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Episcopate Supporter

Kathleen Podoba-Lind, Willoughby, OH.....	\$1,000.00
(IMO Family Members)	
Dorothy Aldea, Royal Oak, MI.....	\$100.00
Psa Mary Copacia, Shelby Twp, MI.....	\$100.00
Silvia Costea, Northville, MI.....	\$100.00
Elaine Luca, Struthers, OH.....	\$100.00
George Regep, Bloomfield, MI.....	\$100.00

2025 Episcopate Assessment

St George, Toronto, ON.....	\$11,500.00
Annunciation Cathedral, Montreal, QC.....	\$10,300.00
St Mary, Anaheim, CA.....	\$8,400.00
Holy Forty Martyrs, Aurora, ON.....	\$7,800.00
Holy Resurrection, Hayward, CA.....	\$6,900.00
St George, Winnipeg, MB.....	\$6,400.00
St Stephen, Pinellas Park, FL.....	\$6,400.00
St John the Baptist, Woonsocket, RI.....	\$6,375.00
St George Cathedral, Regina, SK.....	\$6,200.00
Holy Nativity, Chicago, IL.....	\$6,000.00
Holy Trinity, Vancouver, BC.....	\$6,000.00
Holy Protection, L'Île-Bizard.....	\$5,400.00
St Nicholas, Montreal, QC.....	\$5,400.00
St Mary, Laval, QC.....	\$5,000.00
Holy Brancoveanu Martyrs, Lachine, QC.....	\$4,400.00
St John the Evangelist, Vaughan, ON.....	\$4,100.00
St Polycarp, Naples, FL.....	\$3,900.00
Holy Ascension, Montreal, QC.....	\$3,100.00
St John, Lakewood, CO.....	\$3,000.00
St Andrew, Houston, TX.....	\$2,600.00
Holy Cross, London, ON.....	\$2,600.00
St Nicholas, Regina, SK.....	\$2,100.00
St Joseph of Moldova, Saint-Catherine, QC.....	\$1,920.00
St John the Baptist, Glendale, AZ.....	\$1,335.00
St Mary, Portland, OR.....	\$1,020.00
St John Chrysostom, Nashville, TN.....	\$1,000.00
Presentation, Fairlawn, OH.....	\$555.00
Annunciation, Grand Rapids, MI.....	\$425.00
Sts Michael & Gabriel, Palm Springs, CA.....	\$200.00

**General Donations
(Hierarch Travel Expenses)**

Holy Trinity, Miramar, FL	\$3,000.00
Holy Cross, Hollywood, FL	\$1,000.00
Holy Trinity, Miramar, FL	\$1,000.00
St George, Canton, OH	\$1,000.00
St John the Baptist, Kitchener, ON	\$1,000.00
St Mary, Chicago, IL	\$1,000.00
St Mary, Dallas, TX	\$1,000.00
St Andrew, Houston, TX	\$800.00
St Mary, Elmhurst, NY	\$700.00
St Mary Magdalene, Houston, TX	\$700.00
St John, Toronto, ON	\$502.65
Descent of the Holy Spirit, Merrillville, IN	\$500.00
Descent of the Holy Spirit, Warren, MI	\$500.00
Holy Cross, Alexandria, VA	\$500.00
Holy Cross, Phoenix, AZ	\$500.00
St John of Suceava, Manchester, NH	\$500.00
St Stephen, Pinellas Park, FL	\$500.00
St John, Lakewood, CO	\$400.00
St Andrew, Laval, QC	\$344.80
Holy Annunciation, Grand Rapids, MI	\$300.00
St Elijah, Anjou, QC	\$300.00
Lucian & Nicoleta Rosu, Kentwood, MI	\$200.00

General Donations (Other)

Lucian Pop, Farmington Hills, MI	\$1,000.00
(Victor Pop Scholarship)	
Antoinette Scala, McLean, VA	\$500.00
(Archbishop’s Charity Endowment (ACE) Fund)	
Holy Ascension, Montreal, QC	\$225.00
(Hurricane Helene Appeal)	
Roxana Florescu, Farmington Hills, MI	\$100.00
Madelena Ilcus, Palm Beach Gardens, FL	\$100.00
(Pascha Donation)	
M/M Lenny Jones, Philadelphia, PA	\$100.00
(Seminarian Fund)	
M/M Calin Nema, Naples, FL	\$100.00
(Memorial List - Pomelnic)	
M/M Leonard Jones, Philadelphia, PA	\$50.00
Lynn Ann Nitzu, Schaumburg, IL	\$50.00
(Stanitz Scholarship Fund – IMO John Stanitz)	

Memoriam

Dr. Virgil Barbu, Oakland, MI	\$500.00
(IMO of father, Virgil & deceased family members)	
Doina & Alexis Vircol, Wilmette, IL	\$300.00
(IMO parents: Zamfira & Vasile)	
M/M Victor Dinu, Skokie, IL	\$100.00
(IMO family & friends)	
Daniel & Maria Plantus, Clarkston, MI.....	\$100.00
(IMO Constantin & Veturia Nicula)	
Madelena & Joseph Ilcus, Palm Beach Gardens, FL.....	\$60.00
(IMO Ioan Vidrighin)	
Daniela Coleman, Hudson, FL	\$40.00
(IMO Constantin & Veturia Nicula)	

Vatra Generations

St Anne, Pomona, CA.....	\$2,010.60
Anonymous	\$2,000.00
Attorney Michael Lawrence, Layton, UT.....	\$1,680.00
Robert A. Mitchell, Detroit, MI.....	\$1,100.00
National Philanthropic Trust.....	\$1,000.00
Dr Sonia Voiculescu & Christopher Kaesgen, Cleveland, OH.....	\$1,000.00
Anonymous.....	\$250.00
Manuela Cruga, Waterford, MI	\$100.00
Olga Impey, Bloomington, IN	\$100.00
Constantine Nan, Carrollton, TX.....	\$100.00
Anonymous.....	\$50.00
Manuela Cruga, Waterford, MI	\$50.00
(IMO Fr Leo Copacia)	
Manuela Cruga, Waterford, MI	\$50.00
(IMO Veturia Nicula)	
Rev Fr & Psa Mircea VasIU, St Paul, MN	\$50.00
Peter Lee, Huntingdon Valley, PA	\$48.32

Vatra Generations – Bishop Andrei’s 5th Ordination Anniversary

St John the Baptist, Glendale, AZ	\$3,000.00
St Mary of Magdala, Houston, TX	\$500.00
St Joseph the Merciful, Saint-Catherine, QC.....	\$300.00



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\$688,440.35 collected as
May 27, 2025



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