



ELECTRONIC BULLETIN

NOVEMBER 2011

A. MESSAGE OF THE HIERARCHS

- **Blessing at the Start of a Journey Faces of Saints. Metropolitans Simion Ștefan and Andrei Șaguna**

At the end of last week, on October 29 and 30, two remarkable personalities of Romanian religious life were proclaimed saints in Sibiu and Alba Iulia: Metropolitans Simion Ștefan (1643-1656) and Andrei Șaguna (1848-1873). These are two events that take our thoughts to the meaning of sanctity and the way it is incarnated. In the New Testament holiness is understood as the participation of the Church, of those who make it up, in the holiness of the work of salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Baptism a person receives the grace of restoration and salvation in the image and likeness of God; in Chrismation the Holy Spirit guides him and makes this power operative; and in the Eucharist he is strengthened with the food of eternity for perfect and complete life. The fruit of the gifts of God are the saints. First the apostles, then the martyrs, male and female, later the ascetics, hierarchs, and other saints became living models of dedication in the Church and the community of God.

The two great metropolitans of Transylvania are the same. The first, Simion Ștefan, is considered by Romanian scholars to be “the founder of the Romanian language.” And not just any. When in 1648 he edited the Alba Iulia New Testament in the Romanian language, the great metropolitan actually established at the basis of the Romanian language not only a unified Romanian orthography, but also a fundamental Christian criterion. We can say with certainty that through the appearance of the Bălgrad (Alba Iulia) New Testament the Romanian language gained a deep source of inspiration and spiritual transfiguration. In this way Metropolitan Simion Ștefan became a missionary who worked on the propagation of the message of the Gospel of Salvation and contributed to the standardization of the Romanian language.

The second, Andrei Șaguna, is a precursor of the Church in modern times. His efforts for the emancipation of the Metropolia of Transylvania, as well as his organizational and profoundly missionary ministry among the people by means of Christian culture and education remain essential elements of this great metropolitan’s passage through history. The founding of schools on all levels and the administrative reorganization of the Church on modern principles are just some of the elements that even today stand as witnesses of the visionary thinking of the great metropolitan, and vigorously incarnate the healthy principles which guided his convictions: “The material monuments of a cultural period can be destroyed by barbarian hands,” Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna said,” and a free nation can be deprived of freedom through draconian laws: however, the value of its spiritual monuments and moral customs remains unshaken through all time, for these are above any forced or physical power... we want to awaken through national means the faculties, by which we mean clear and serious thinking in our people, that they may know their being and their destiny and see these used for all good....”

Thus we can see how these two metropolitans make the transition from the model of the martyrs and saints of the early Church to that of the missionary hierarch, responsible and aware of the major importance of Christian teaching in the emancipation of mankind through the Church. Through their life and work, Metropolitans Simion Ștefan and Andrei Șaguna have become apostles and pillars of the Church of Christ.

† IOAN CASIAN OF VICINA

Vicar Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas



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B. ROMANIAN PATRIARCHATE

- **Celebrations in the Romanian Patriarchate in honor of the Feast of Venerable Dimitrie the New, Protector of Bucharest**

The Romanian Patriarchate and the Archdiocese of Bucharest organized a series of celebrations from October 24-28 in honor of the Feast of Venerable Dimitrie the New, Protector of Bucharest (commemorated on October 27), whose holy relics are preserved in the Patriarchal Cathedral. On Monday, October 24, at 9:10 a.m., in the official Salon of the Henri Coanda International Airport, there was a ceremony greeting the honorable Head of St. Andrew the Apostle, the Protector of Romania, brought to Bucharest for the first time by a delegation of the Greek Orthodox Church led by Metropolitan Chrysostom of Patras.

The celebration continued with the first part of a procession, “The Path of the Saints,” with the icon of the Theotokos-Prodomița from Mount Athos and the honorable Head of St. Andrew the Apostle, Protector of Romania, to the construction site of the Cathedral of the Salvation of the People, where they were met by the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church (BOR), Daniel, along with other hierarchs, priests, deacons, and faithful. Following a prayer for the blessing of the construction work and the consecration of the new Chapel dedicated to the Resurrection, the Icon of the Theotokos-Prodomița, and St. John Chrysostom—as well as the blessing of the icon of the Theotokos-Prodomița—the procession with the honorable Head of St. Andrew the Apostle continued along the route of Calea 13 September, Piața Constituției, and Bulevardul Unirii, to the Brâncovean Cross at the foot of the Hill of the Patriarchate. From there began the second part of the procession, “The Path of the Saints,” with the honorable Head of St. Andrew the Apostle, the holy relics of Venerable Dimitrie the New, and of Sts. Constantine and Helen, ending at a special platform prepared in the courtyard of the Patriarchal Cathedral, where the relics were placed for veneration in the baldachin of the Patriarchate.

On Tuesday, October 25, beginning at 9:30 a.m., the Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the Patriarchal Cathedral, followed by a book launching at 1:00 p.m. in the Christian Europe Hall of the Patriarchal Palace, for the book entitled “The Cathedral of the Salvation of the People – the History of an Ideal”, authored by Nicolae St. Noica and recently published by the Editura Basilica of the Romanian Patriarchate.

On Wednesday, October 26, in the Patriarchal Cathedral, Patriarch Daniel officially received the delegation of the Patriarchate of Alexandria, led by the His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa, on a fraternal visit to the Romanian Patriarchate. On the same afternoon, the guest hierarch participated in the consecration of the new headquarters of the Metropolia of Muntenia and Dobrogea (Archdiocese of Bucharest) at 9 Miron Cristea Street, the new headquarters of the Chancery of the Holy Synod, and the new broadcast studio of Trinitas Television in the Patriarchal Palace, as well as the new offices of the financial services of the Patriarchal Administration and the new publishing facilities of *Lumina*, situated in the St. Andrew the Apostle Social Cultural Center (at 1 Bulevardul Regina Maria).



ARHIEPISCOPIA ORTODOXĂ ROMÂNĂ DIN CELE DOUĂ AMERICI
THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE IN THE AMERICAS

5410 N. Newland Ave. Chicago IL 60656

tel: 773.774.1677; fax: 773.774.1805;

www.romarch.org

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On Thursday, October 27 (the Feast of Venerable Dimitrie the New, Protector of Bucharest, the patron feast of the Patriarchal Cathedral), beginning at 9:30 a.m., the Divine Liturgy was celebrated by Patriarch Daniel and His Beatitude Theodoros II, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and all Africa, together with a sobor of Romanian, Greek, Bulgarian and Ukrainian hierarchs, priests, and deacons, on the specially prepared platform near the Patriarchal Cathedral. At 6:00 p.m., in the Patriarch Teoctist Aula Magna of the Patriarchal Palace, was the final stage of the national choral church music contest “Praise the Lord!”, Fourth Edition, organized by the Theological Education Sector of the Romanian Patriarchate in collaboration with the Learning and Activities Sector of the Archdiocese of Bucharest. Included in this final program were six mixed choruses from high schools of the arts which had been the winners at the previous level, having taken place in the various metropolia in Romania.

On Friday, October 28, at 10:30 a.m., in the Patriarch Teoctist Aula Magna of the Patriarchal Palace, was the solemn session of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, entitled “2011 – Homagial Year of Holy Baptism and Holy Matrimony in the Romanian Patriarchate”. In this context the most important spiritual, cultural, and media activities organized this year by the various eparchies of the Romanian Patriarchate in the country and abroad were presented in synthesis and evaluated.

On the afternoon of the same day the honorable Head of St. Andrew the Apostle, Protector of Romania, was taken to the Metropolitan Cathedral of Sibiu for veneration, on the occasion of the proclamation of the canonization of St. Andrei Șaguna, Metropolitan of Transylvania, and remained there until the afternoon of October 29. Then the honorable Head of St. Andrew, Protector of Romania, was taken to the Archdiocesan Cathedral in Alba Iulia, for the occasion of the proclamation of the canonization of St. Simeon Ștefan, Metropolitan of Transylvania. The honorable Head of St. Andrew the Apostle remained in Romania for a week, in Bucharest, Sibiu, and Alba Iulia. The Greek delegation led by Metropolitan Chrysostom of Patras, which had brought the holy relics, returned to Greece on Monday evening, according to Trinitas TV. Prior to the departure for the airport, the relics had been brought to the Patriarchal Residence, from whence they departed for the Henri Coanda Airport, and from there to Greece.

The honorable Head of St. Andrew the Apostle was in Romania for the second time. On the previous occasion the relics had been brought in 1996 to Iași and Galați.

• **The International Theological Congress “The Christian Family” at Bucharest**

During the month of November, in the Patriarch Teoctist Hall of the Patriarchal Palace, there will be an international theological congress entitled “The Christian Family, a Blessing for the Church and Society.” Over the course of three days, Orthodox theology professors, specialists and guests from abroad will present papers and participate in discussions about the theological and existential meaning of the Christian family. During the congress an exhibit will open entitled “Holy Baptism and Holy Matrimony in the Romanian Tradition,” in the “Christian Europe Hall.” This international theological congress is the principal theological event in honor of the year dedicated to the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Matrimony, the two sacraments that form and build up the Christian family. This event takes place with the blessing of His Beatitude, Patriarch Daniel of the Romanian Orthodox Church, from November 1 – 3. “The thematic



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directions which will constitute the basis of the discussions during this congress are: the theological and existential meaning of the family; the role of the Christian family in modern society from the religious, spiritual, and cultural point of view; the protection of the sacred institution of the family from the attacks of contemporary secular society and the cooperation of the Church with the institutions of government for the protection of the family today.” According to Deacon Florin Marica, Inspector for the Theological Education Sector of the Romanian Patriarchate, “the professors and specialists present at the congress will, in accord with the established directions, present scientific communications, which will approach the subject of the Christian family from historical-liturgical, biblical-systematic, canonical-pastoral, and social-missionary perspectives.” During the program there will also be a presentation of the documentary film “The Romanian Wedding”, a visual and auditory incursion into the treasures and symbolism of the cultural and religious customs and traditions associated with the Sacrament of Marriage. The film is a production of Trinitas Television of the Romanian Patriarchate. Following the viewing of the documentary is the opening of the exhibit “Holy Baptism and Holy Matrimony in the Romanian Tradition,” which will present the most beautiful and representative frescos, icons, miniatures, embroideries and weavings, mosaics and works of stained glass, reflecting Baptism and the Christian family in the art of the Orthodox Church. The sessions on the second day of the congress, November 2, will include participation by Prof. Michele Riondino from the Lateran Pontifical University in Rome, Prof. Alejandro Torres Gutierrez from the Public University of Navarra, Prof. Luis Okulik from the Council of the Conference of European Bishops, and Prof. Antony Borisov from the Theological Academy of Moscow, along with other theology professors from Romania and abroad. In the afternoon the guests will make a visit to the Patriarch Justinian Marina Community Social Services Center, which houses an urgent care center for mothers with children who are victims of familial violence, and a Day Care program for school children from poor and single-parent families. The international theological congress “The Christian Family, a Blessing for the Church and Society” is organized by the Theological Education Sector of the Romanian Patriarchate. News taken from the journal Lumina: <http://www.ziarullumina.ro/articole;1771;1;64631;0;Rolul-familiei-crestine-in-zilele-noastre.html>

C. WORLD ORTHODOXY

• **The Coptic Christians – a Historical Miracle in Danger of Disappearing**

In February the daily newspaper La Croix published an interview with photographer Michele Borzoni, who authored a report on the Christians of Pakistan. After that, the photographer went to Egypt to meet with the Coptic Christians. The report shows the tensions in the heart of the Coptic community.

“In contrast with the Christians of Pakistan, the Copts have always existed in Egypt. Numbering 11 million, 10% of the population of Egypt, they are the largest Christian community in the Middle East and the largest religious minority group in the region. They are the objects of intense discrimination and extremist Islamicist attacks, and they complain that the media and the international community are doing nothing to protect the Coptic community. I was fascinated by the marvelous way they live their life and faith and by their pride in being Christians,” said the photographer.



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Religious Traditions. The Coptic community a treasury of some very important traditions and symbols of religious unity. The Coptic liturgy, wedding ceremonies, vibrant monasticism, the monastic life at the Anba Boshoy Monastery in the Wadi-el-Natroun Desert, all these point to a true miracle of Christian history, in which faithfulness to a tradition is not a mere word, but the fundamental reality of life. This miraculous image, of a unique symbolic and cultural poignancy, must be preserved at any cost. In a country where hundreds of thousands of Christians are thrown out of their houses due to religious persecution, Christianity must be protected and preserved in its essential value, peace and love. What is more important, the faith of the Copts is lived at the cost of their lives, the death threats of radical Islamicists often being translated into deeds. The Copts are thus in the antechamber of martyrdom, day after day, their faith being written in terms of life and death. *Source: <http://www.la-croix.com>*

- **The Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Antioch calls its faithful to fight against the current crisis**

The Lebanese French-language daily “L’Orient-Le jour” publishes the appeal of the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Antioch to all its faithful, to participate in the fight against the economic crisis. In a communiqué published at the conclusion of the working session of the Holy Synod, presided by His Beatitude Patriarch Ignatios IV, the Orthodox bishops of the Patriarchate of Antioch affirmed that “the Church cannot stand around with its arms folded in the light of the proofs of oppression and discrimination to which people and groups are subjected,” especially since numerically it is in a majority position among the oriental Churches. The Holy Synod points out that “the Orthodox Church of Antioch has been in this region since Apostolic times, and has carried out works of a national and cultural pioneer character in these lands for two millennia.” The Orthodox hierarchs therefore call on all the faithful to participate actively in seeking appropriate solutions for a way out of the crisis, for the progress and prosperity of the people they pastor. Orthodox Christians are called “to work actively for peace, social justice, and the building of a state based on citizenship, equality of rights and responsibilities.” The Orthodox are also urged to be loyally attached to their national homelands through ecclesial and social solidarity among residents and emigrants. The Holy Synod’s communiqué encourages the establishment of productive institutions. *Source: <http://www.lorientlejour.com>*

D. AMERICAN ORTHODOXY

- **Dead Sea Manuscripts arrive in Manhattan**

For the next 6 months, visitors to Times Square in New York will have the chance to see a rare collection of 20 manuscripts from the Dead Sea, along with hundreds of artifacts from the Biblical era, brought from Israel.

The exhibit, entitled “Discovery Times Square: Dead Sea Scrolls: Life and Faith in Biblical Times,” includes fragments from the War Manuscripts, the Books of Genesis, Psalms, Exodus and Isaiah, along with other manuscripts brought to the public for the first time in modern history. The exhibit, which is the largest and most important collection of artifacts on display



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outside Israel, also contains many objects from ancient Jerusalem, including a gold and pearl earring discovered in the City of David and a 3 ton stone from the Western Wall of Jerusalem, which was a foundation wall of Herod's Temple. *Source: <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org>*

E. THE LIFE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE

- **AROLA in support of Christian Women**

The Women's organization of our Archdiocese, AROLA, is continuing a program of activities in support of Christian women and their needs. Among these we mention the following in the coming months:

-Saturday, November 26, 2011 – Spiritual Life Evening for the Eastern U.S., with the theme “Women's Dress in Church and the Fashions of This Age.” The program will take place at Holy Trinity Church in Philadelphia, and the speaker is Prof. Elena de Avila. More information is available on the internet at <http://www.holytrinityphiladelphia.org> or you can contact Geta Alexandru at 718.440.0114 or alecon@ellimanpm.com

-The “YOU ARE NOT ALONE” project is designed to support our parishes in implementing social programs. The objectives of the project are: to communicate to those in special need that there is always an alternative in resolving their problems; to revive the hopes of those temporarily in difficulty, by giving material and moral support. The parishes may make requests for difficult social cases, mothers with several children, extreme financial situations, etc. Every parish may make a single application for a social case. In January the AROLA committee will select a single application from each deanery and the respective case will receive \$500 in aid. The funds available for this project are \$2500 (\$500 for each deanery). Applications may be made through December 31, 2011 via e-mail to thmiller13@yahoo.com or by mail to 56 Andrews St, Victor NY 14564-1262, to the attention of Theodora Miller, AROLA President. More information about the project can be obtained by sending an e-mail to frdaniel@romanianholyltrinity.org

- **Archbishop Nicolae's Pastoral Itinerary for November**

The First Hierarchy of our Church will celebrate the Feast of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel in the parish bearing that name in Montreal QC, both on November 6, when it celebrates its 10th Anniversary, and also on November 8. On November 12, Archbishop Nicolae will participate in the Consecration of the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in Anaheim CA, and on the 12th he will celebrate the Divine Liturgy at the Exaltation of the Holy Cross parish in Hayward, which will host the General Assembly of the Western U.S. Deanery. The Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos will find Archbishop Nicolae at the Sts. Constantine and Helen Cathedral in Chicago. On Sunday, November 27, His Eminence will celebrate the Divine Liturgy at St. Andrew's Church in Calgary AB, and on the Feast of St. Andrew at St. Nicholas Church in Vancouver BC.

EDITORIAL TEAM: General Editor: Fr. Daniel Ene; English Translation: Fr. David Hudson