



## **His Holiness Patriarch Kirill takes part in divine service celebrated in Bucharest in commemoration of martyrs who suffered in the years of persecution**



On October 27, 2017, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, currently on a visit to the Romanian Orthodox Church, took part in the solemn divine service in the open air at Patriarchal Hill in Bucharest.

Church festivities are dedicated to the commemoration day of St. Demetrius of Basarbov, heavenly patron of Bucharest; to the memory of the martyrs and confessors who suffered under the theomachist regime in Romania; and to the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the enthronement of His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of Romania. The Bulgarian and Romanian Orthodox Churches commemorate St. Demetrius of Basarbov on October 27; the Russian Orthodox Church commemorates him on October 26/November 8.

The Primates of the Russian, Romanian and Albanian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia, bishops of the Romanian Patriarchate, representatives of the Local

Orthodox Churches proceeded from the Patriarchal chambers to the square and venerated the relics of Ss Demetrius the New of Basarbov and St. Seraphim of Sarov.

His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of Romania, His Beatitude Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania and His Beatitude Metropolitan Rastislav of the Czech Lands and Slovakia officiated at the Divine Liturgy concelebrating with the heads of the delegations of the Local Orthodox Churches, bishops and clerics of the Romanian Orthodox Church, and members of the official delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Among honorary guests attending the service were H.E. Valery Kuzmin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to Romania; Mr. Paul Stănescu, deputy prime minister of Romania; representatives of the state authorities of the country.

The Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the Romanian and Church Slavonic languages and broadcast live by 'Trinitas TV' Romanian church channel, Russian 'Spas' TV and Patriarchia.ru – official site of the Russian Orthodox Church.

After the Reading from the Gospel His Holiness Patriarch Kirill delivered a sermon on the purpose of Christian life and the teaching of St. Seraphim of Sarov.

Patriarchal vicar bishop Varlaam of Ploiești read out a pastoral of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church declaring 2017 the Year of commemoration of Patriarch Justinian (1901-1977) and of the confessors and defenders of Orthodoxy who had performed their feat under the theomachist regime.

After the Litany of Fervent Supplication prayers were offered up in the Romanian, Church Slavonic and Albanian languages and 'Memory Eternal' was proclaimed to the confessors and defenders of Orthodoxy in all countries in which communist regime had existed.

His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel presented Romanian cleric and laypeople who suffered during the years of communist regime with the Patriarchal Cross, the highest award of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

At the request of Patriarch Daniel, Patriarch Kirill addressed the participants in the festivities after the Liturgy. He cordially thanked the Primate of the Romanian Orthodox Church for hospitality and "the opportunity to celebrate the Divine Liturgy together with all brothers who have arrived in Bucharest and with bishops of the Romanian Orthodox Church and to recall all people who suffered for Christ's sake in the hard years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We know that blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christianity and that martyrs and confessors who lost their life in our country in those years are praying for all of us.

“We feel their prayers also because many of them were our relatives. Indeed, what had happened to our fathers and grandfathers happened not so long ago.

“Once each of us can confront the dilemma: to be with Christ or sin against Him. Today no one forcibly tears a Christian away from the Church or makes him renounce Christ, but a lot is being done in order to make people forget Christ and perceive the Church only as a part of national tradition, a variety of folklore. However, the Church is not only the past, but also the present. Yesterday, today and tomorrow she is called to confess the Lord and Saviour not only by celebrating liturgy and by prayer. Members of the Church should bring witness about the effectiveness of the Gospel by their life. To confess Christ today is no less difficult than in the years of persecution, because people can be torn away from God not only by force, but also by different kinds of temptation and by shifting the focus of attention from Heaven to earth.

“The example of martyrs and confessors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century teaches us to be faithful to Christ, not to betray Him, to be with Him in joy and in sorrow, and call His holy name. This will be the best memory of martyrs and confessors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. May God grant strength to our generation and especially to our youth to remain faithful to Christ in spite of all temptations in our society!”

His Holiness continued to say: “I would like to express profound gratitude to His Beatitude for having gathered us here in Bucharest. In our long talk yesterday we discussed many problems facing our Churches and our nations. It is important for the Primate to meet more often as these meetings help us understand one another even better, to feel that we are brothers, and to comprehend our common mission in the contemporary world. I also thank Your Beatitude for your labors and care for your flock. As a token of my love and respect please accept pectoral icon with the image of Christ the Saviour and a bishop’s staff – a symbol of your archpastoral ministry. Many Years!” The last words Patriarch Kirill said in the Romanian language.

Patriarch Daniel thanked the participants in the festivities and presented icons of St. Demetrius the New of Basarbov to the Primate of the Local Orthodox Churches and heads of the delegations.

While proceeding to the Patriarchal Palace to attend the reception given on behalf of the Romanian Orthodox Church the Primate of the four Orthodox Churches, representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches, and bishops of the Romanian Patriarchate venerated the relics of St. Demetrius the New of Basarbov and St. Seraphim of Sarov.

Since the day the shrine with a particle of the relics of St. Seraphim of Sarov was brought in Bucharest many people stood in long lines to venerate them.

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