

THE HISTORY

I. The First Signs of Romanian Immigration on the North American Continent

Romanian presence on the North American continent started towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The history of American Romanians started around the year 1895 with the wave of massive emigrations, especially from Transylvania, Bucovina and Banat—Romanian territories which were at the time under Austro-Hungarian domination. The main characteristic of this first generation of Romanian immigrants, named “the thousand and the return fare” generation (1895-1924), was an economic one (these people planned to spend a limited amount of time in “The New World,” just as long as they needed to save \$1,000 and their trip expenses, and they would go back home). The next phase in the evolution of the Romanian element in America is that of “becoming Romanian-Americans” (1924-1948). During this period of time, those who stayed in America, as well as those who returned to Romania but soon came back, adapted to and got integrated into North American structures and society; the idea of going back to the mother country for good was abandoned or kept as a faraway dream at most. The third phase in the history of Romanian-Americans—the anti-Communist exile (1949-1989)—is fundamentally different from the preceding phases in that the main cause of emigration was a political one. This new wave of immigrants contributed in a decisive way to the affirmation of the irreversible identity of the Romanian-American community with regard to the “old country.” After the fall of Communism in December 1989, the so-called “quantitative” phase (from 1990 to the present) began, a phase which is very similar to the pioneer age of Romanian immigration into North America, in that the economic aspect is its main characteristic.

II. The Church Life of Orthodox Romanians at the End of the 19th Century and the Beginning of the 20th Century

2.1 The Beginnings of Church Life of Romanian Immigrants in Canada and the U.S.

Even though the causes and characteristics of Romanian immigration to the North American continent remain similar, the destinies of Romanians in Canada diverge from those of Romanians in the U.S. by a series of essential differences which crucially mark the particulars of the two Romanian communities. Thus, if Romanians who immigrated into the country of the Statue of Liberty went by choice to the big industrial areas such as Chicago, Detroit, and New York, the Romanians who went to Canada were directed toward areas almost uninhabited that would become great agricultural areas: Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba. As pioneers of immigration, Romanians helped populate and civilize central regions of Canada; they cleared and fallowed lands, which then became their properties. Their way of life in the vast prairie and the absence of any church (in cities, immigrants could go to churches of other confessions) explains why parishes were founded sooner in Canada than in the United States, and preceded the foundation of cultural-philanthropic societies. In the United States, Romanians who settled mostly in great industrial centers first founded cultural and benefit societies. In November 1902, Romanians in Cleveland, Ohio founded the “Carpatina Cultural and Benefit Society” (the first society of Romanians in the United States), and founded “The Romanian Club” in August 1904. Both in Canada and in the United States, the organization of ecclesiastical life took place under distinct objective and historical conditions which imprinted on these parishes a specific character. These parishes were founded by lay people who came together, built churches, and sent for clerics from the “Old World.” The clergy came mainly from two Metropolises: that of Transylvania (with its see in Sibiu) and that of Moldavia (with its see in Iași); the former influenced the Romanian communities in the United States, and the latter influenced the Romanian communities in Canada.

2.2 The First Parishes Founded in Canada and the U.S.

The undertaking of the building of the first Romanian church on the American continent began in 1901 with the purchase of a plot of 40 acres in Boian, Alberta (100 km/62.5 miles northeast of Edmonton) by Romanian immigrants who were originally from Boian in Bucovina. The church was erected in the following years and was consecrated in 1905. In 1902, the Romanian Orthodox Parish of Regina, Saskatchewan was founded with the patron “Saint Nicholas.” On March 27, 1903, Archimandrite Evghenie Ungureanu arrived in this parish, with the blessing of the Metropolitan of Moldavia. In 1910 Protosinghelos Ghenadie Gheorghiu followed, and in 1913, Protosinghelos Silvestru Ionescu. One by one, new Romanian parishes were established in a similar way in Canada (8 parishes by 1910-1911), which functioned under the canonical omophorion of the Metropolitan of Moldova. On August 15, 1904, the Romanians of Cleveland, Ohio decided to establish the first Romanian Orthodox Parish in the United States, with its patron “Saint Mary,” and in December 1905 Fr. Moise Balea, the first parish priest in Cleveland, Ohio, and in the United States, arrived in the U.S. In 1906, Fr. Moise Balea founded the Holy Cross parish (the second one in the United States) in South Sharon, Pennsylvania, the Saint Peter parish in Youngstown, Ohio, then a parish in Indianapolis, and, on March 11, 1906, the Saint George parish in Indiana Harbor, Indiana. Joining Fr. Moise Balea in his pioneering mission were Fr. Trandafir Scorobet (November, 1906), Fr. Ioan Tatu (who in 1907 founded the Holy Friday parish in Newark, Ohio), and Fr. Simeon Mihăltian (June 13, 1908); all came with the blessing of and under obedience to the Metropolitan of Transylvania.

2.3 Founding of the First Romanian Orthodox Deanery in America

In 1912, sent by the Metropolitan of Transylvania, Fr. Ioan Podea returned to America on a mission to “organize the parishes in America into a deanery”—which was registered on July 29, 1913, at the courthouse in Youngstown, Ohio, according to the laws of the state of Ohio. This Deanery consisted of 16 parishes (parishes in Canada did not belong because of huge distances and because they were under the canonical jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Moldova). Fr. Ioan Podea therefore became the first Romanian Orthodox Dean in America.

2.4 The Ecclesiastical Status of North America up until 1929

As a consequence of the “imposed election” as Metropolitan of Sibiu of Vasile Mangra, a “pro-Hungarian” prelate, the Romanians living in the United States, led by Dean Fr. Ioan Podea, met in Youngstown, Ohio, on February 22-24, 1918 and decided to break all connections with the pro-Hungarian Metropolitan of Sibiu and to found “The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of the United States of North America”. They wrote a “Charter of Worship and Obedience” addressed to the Metropolitan of Hungro-Wallachia in Bucharest, asking to be united and accepted under his omophorion, seemingly anticipating the unification of the Romanian Principalities. Immediately after World War I, Nicolae Balan replaced Vasile Mangra as Metropolitan of Sibiu and, consequently, the Metropolis of Bucharest decided not to interfere in the affairs of American Romanians or in the area of influence which traditionally had belonged to the Metropolis of Transylvania. Since parishes were multiplying and they had no bishop of their own, and influenced by the example of other ethnic groups, the Romanians in America decided to have their own Episcopate. Therefore, in April 1923 a Mixed Ecclesiastical Congress (both clergy and lay people) took place in Cleveland, Ohio, from which the representatives of the parishes sent a memorandum to the Holy Synod requesting, once again, the founding of an Episcopate of Orthodox Romanians in America. Nevertheless, ecclesiastic authorities from Romania did not expedite the founding of a diocesan organization for the Romanians in America, as they deemed it unnecessary. In 1921, Fr. Ioan Radu succeeded Fr. Ioan Podea as Dean, and Fr. Victor Mureșan followed from November 1923 until July 1927. On October 7, 1924, Romanian priests in America who had been ordained by Russian bishops held a conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania,

in which they emphasized again the necessity of the founding of a “Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in the United States.” Until such time as this came about, they decided they would affiliate jurisdictionally with the Russian Bishop of New York, who was Adam Filipowski at the time. This decision did not have its expected result because not everyone agreed with the subjection of Romanians to a bishop of a different nationality.

III. The Founding of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese in America

3.1 The Founding and Accreditation of the Diocese

On May 29, 1928, the Holy Synod decided to send Fr. Trandafir Scorobeț, a member of the Metropolitan Council of Sibiu, to America. Arriving in America as a delegate of Metropolitan Nicolae of Transylvania, Fr. Scorobeț was confronted with the problem of the disunity of the Romanians on many levels. On the one hand, the priests were divided into two factions: those who had come from Romania as missionaries and those who had been ordained, without having attended seminary, by Russian bishops in America. On the other hand, the Romanian parishes in Canada were under obedience to the Metropolis of Moldova, and some were even under Russian oversight, following the old calendar. Fr. Trandafir Scorobeț started visiting those parishes in order to assess their situations and their problems. The result of these visits was detailed in a report recommending: a fundamental reorganization of the religious communities; the installation of missionary clergy and the recall of ineffective priests; and a missionary bishop to be salaried by the Romanian government for 10 years. On January 30, 1929, Fr. Scorobeț convened a Clergy Conference in Cleveland. Pastoral problems regarding the mission in America were discussed, as well as organizational problems. The clergy declared their acknowledgement of the canonical authority of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. It was also at this conference that an Association of Romanian Priests in America was founded, with six deaneries. It was decided that the problem of the organization of parishes should be referred to a Congress of all parishes.

The long-awaited Congress took place on **April 25-28, 1929**, in Detroit, at the St. George parish pastored by Fr. Octavian Mureșan. This Congress was organized in three sessions; Fr. Trandafir Scorobeț was president, Fr. Octavian Mureșan was general secretary, and Frs. Andrei Moldovanu, Glicherie Moraru and Ioan Truția were session secretaries. From among lay participants, Nicolae Tecușan, Ilarion Morar, Ioan Ciolac and Gheorghe Ivașcu served as notaries, or secretaries. This Congress established essential points for the new Statute of organization, and the following decree was adopted: “We, the representatives of Romanian Orthodox parishes in America and Canada, after 25 years of Romanian life in these countries during which our churches and parishioners have gone through great suffering and need, do decide to establish the Romanian Orthodox Church in America and Canada as an **Autonomous Missionary Episcopate under the jurisdiction of the Holy Synod of Romania**, and that our Bishop should be a rightful member of the Holy Synod of Romania.” On November 21, 1929, the National Ecclesiastical Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Church in Bucharest approved the decree of the first Congress of the Missionary Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America and Canada, held in Detroit, Michigan. On November 1, 1930, the Holy Synod approved the founding of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate of America and Canada through Decree Nr. 10/120/1930. In collaboration with the government of Romania, Patriarch Miron Cristea wrote a proposed Law authorizing the new episcopate, which was passed by the Holy Synod in Bucharest in April 1934.

3.2 The Organization of the Episcopate without an Elected Hierarch

Until a bishop was named, the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate of America and Canada was led by an Interim Committee consisting of four priests and eight laymen: Priests Ioan

Truția, President, Octavian Mureșan, Secretary, Eli Pop and Daniil Maxim; and laymen Daniil Radu, Treasurer, Breaz and Nicolae Stan, Auditors, Ilarion Morariu, Nicolae Tecușan, I. Barbu, Nicolae Muntean and Ilie Stoica. It was established that, in the case that the bishop would be somewhat late to arrive, this Committee would be in charge of the progress of the Missionary Episcopate until the next Ecclesiastical Congress.

3.3 The Election, Ordination, and Installation of His Grace Policarp Morușca, the First Orthodox Bishop of Romanians in America

On January 26, 1935, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church elected Policarp Morușca, abbot of the Hodoș-Bodrog Monastery, as the first Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate of America and Canada. He was elevated to the episcopate on March 24, 1935, in the St. George Patriarchal Chapel in Bucharest; as he himself related, “Our Lord and God Jesus Christ, having mercy on me, His humble servant, called me from the shadows of the holy Hodoș-Bodrog Monastery to the high dignity of Missionary Bishop. On Sunday, March 24, 1935, during the Divine Liturgy in the historic Chapel of the Holy Patriarchate of Bucharest, I was ordained Bishop by the laying of hands of His Eminence Gurie, Metropolitan of Bessarabia, His Grace Ghenadie, Bishop of Buzău, and His Eminence Veniamin, Vicar of the Holy Metropolitan Church of Hungro-Wallachia, and from the hand of His Beatitude Miron, Patriarch of Romania, I received the Bishop’s Staff.”¹ On July 4, 1935, at St. George Church in Detroit, Michigan, Policarp Morușca was enthroned as Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate of America and Canada. He shepherded the Romanians of the North-American continent between 1935 and 1939.

IV. His Grace Bishop Policarp Morușca

4.1 Biographical Details

Bishop Policarp Morușca was born into a priest’s family on March 20, 1883, in the Cristesti-Dealul Geoagiului village of Alba County; his parents, Ioan and Ana, baptized him Pompei. He spent his childhood in Craiva, in Alba County, where his father was priest. He went to primary school in Ighiu, and then continued in Alba Iulia until the 3rd year of high school, when he moved to Blaj. In 1902 he graduated from High School in Blaj. From 1902-1905 he attended the Andrei Șaguna Theological Seminary in Sibiu. He passed his qualifying priesthood exams with the grade of “very good” on June 17-18, 1905. Then he worked as a teacher in confessional schools in Sebeș, Alba County, in 1905-1906, in Luduș, Sibiu County, in 1906-1907, and in Pâclișa (now Alba County) in 1907-1908. On June 19, 1908, he was ordained to the priesthood by His Eminence Metropolitan Ioan Mețianu, for the parish of Șeica Mare, Sibiu county. Between March 1, 1919, and September 1, 1920, he served as an administrative consultant for the Consistory of the Eparchy of Cluj, and also as employee of the Directive Council for the Ministry of Religion and Education. At the request of His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan, he became Fr. Confessor at the Theological Institute of Sibiu between October 1, 1920 and August 31, 1921; he also taught canon law, liturgics, and pastoral practice. On September 1, 1921, he was appointed director of the Metropolitan Statistical Office, while working as a spiritual father for the Sibiu Penitentiary. At the same time, he was entrusted with the offices of Secretary General of Andrei Șaguna Clergy Association, and secretary of the Society of Romanian Orthodox Women. Between 1922 and 1924 he was editor of the publication *The Theological Review*, and also helped with editing other newspapers and magazines. In January 1923 he was given the right to wear the red sash and was awarded the medal “Reward for Church Work.” In the autumn of 1925, he participated in a pilgrimage organized by Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan to the Holy Places of Jerusalem; he was awarded the title of Commander of the Order of the Holy Sepulcher. Not long after, he entered the Hodoș Bodrog Monastery in Arad as a monk and received the name of

Policarp. Between 1925 and 1935 he served as abbot of Hodoş Bodrog Monastery. On January 26, 1935, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church elected him as the first bishop of Romanians in the U.S. and Canada. On June 27, 1935, he reached Ellis Island, New York, on the ship “Europa”, and was enthroned on July 4, 1935, in Detroit, Michigan. Between 1935 and 1939 he worked as a bishop in the United States and Canada, edited the Solia Magazine, laid the foundation for the Diocesan Center Vatra Românească, and managed to visit most of the Romanian Orthodox parishes in the Americas. From July 17 to November 7, 1937, he made a visit to Romania. In late July of 1939, he returned to Romania and thereafter was not able to return to America. Between 1941 and 1944, he was appointed deputy of the Bishop of Ismail-Cetatea Albă by Patriarch Nicodim Munteanu; between 1944 and 1945 he was director of the Dormitory of the Theological Institute in Bucharest. During the period 1945-1946, he was appointed deputy bishop.

4.2 Pastoral-Administrative Achievements in America (1935-1939)

Bishop Policarp Morușca came to the United States accompanied by Archimandrite Ioachim Popescu and Hierodeacon Petru Prohntitchi; he was installed with great pomp in St. George Church in Detroit, Michigan on July 4, 1935. Under the chairmanship of Bishop Policarp Morușca, the Church Congress of the newly established Episcopate approved the Statutes of organization of the Romanian Church in America. These Statutes had been approved by the Central Ecclesiastical Council in Bucharest on May 6, 1936. Under his leadership a farm was purchased, with an area of 200 acres (about 81 hectares) in Grass Lake, Michigan, which was named Vatra Românească (the Romanian Hearth). Here he wanted to establish a Romanian Orthodox monastery, the bishop’s residence, a nursing home for the elderly, and a camp for children and youth. Bishop Policarp Morușca managed to make pastoral visits to most of the Romanian Orthodox parishes in the U.S. and Canada, as he himself related: “For a whole year, almost without a break, I was on missionary journeys, on long and tiring roads, in the summer heat and in frost. I slept where I was given a place to sleep, I ate what I was given, and I received all this as good, reckoning that I was permanently on the battlefield, where there can be no thought of comfort. I was welcomed everywhere and I had the consolation of saying that I have met the Romanians in America in their own homes, face to face. This is how I gained the experience and orientation needed to organize a solid Missionary Episcopate in America ... In the four years I spent in America, I believe I was never at home, in my residence, for more than two consecutive Sundays, unless I was detained by illness.”²

Bishop Policarp showed concern for the catechization of faithful, and also for the organization of parishes and the Episcopate. In America, Bishop Policarp met Christians of other denominations and he understood that only together, while respecting our own faith, can we work for the benefit of our communities and for the fulfillment of our mission. Also, it was in America that His Grace Bishop Policarp understood the dimensions of his mission, that of “an ambassador of Romanian Orthodoxy across land and sea,”³ as he considered himself from the moment of his ordination to the episcopacy. Bishop Policarp also managed to found two auxiliary organizations that worked within the Missionary Episcopate, one involving Romanian Orthodox youth and the other for Orthodox Christian women. When he left for Romania in 1939, the Missionary Episcopate in America and Canada had under its jurisdiction six deaneries, 44 parishes, 62 missions with 43 places of worship served by 34 priests.

4.3 His Return to Romania: 1939-1947

In the summer of 1939 Bishop Policarp Morușca returned to Romania, from which he never left for America again. Although he was far from his faithful, he always inquired, by the means available at that time, into the situation of the Missionary Episcopate in the United States and Canada. Patriarch Nicodim Munteanu of Romania appointed him director of the Dormitory of the Theological Institute in Bucharest in the summer of 1940. Only one year later, in 1941, after Dionisie Erhan, Bishop

of Cetatea Albă-Ismail, retired, Patriarch Nicodim sent Bishop Policarp Morușca as vicar bishop for this eparchy, where he would serve until 1944. His mission in this place was not without trials, considering the international situation of the time, i.e. World War II, yet he proved to be a good organizer of ecclesiastical administrative activities. After his return from Cetatea Albă, he reprised his function as director of the Dormitory of the Radu Vodă Theological Institute in Bucharest for a year (1944-1945). In 1945 Patriarch Nicodim appointed him as vicar bishop for the Maramureș Diocese, where he also had to deal with many difficulties, especially due to this episcopate's difficult financial situation. In 1946 he stepped aside from the leadership of this eparchy.

4.4 The Last Part of His Life (1947-1958)

To the last moment of his life, he hoped he could return to the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate in the United States of America and Canada to be its shepherd again, as he had been appointed by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church in 1935. Due to the political unrest in Romania at the end of World War II and the inauguration of the Communist regime, Bishop Policarp Morușca, as well as other bishops of that time, was forced to retire, being retired in 1948. He was under house arrest and he lived at the Reunification of the Nation Cathedral in Alba Iulia. Between 1955 and 1958 he was abbot of the St. John the Baptist Monastery in Alba Iulia. On October 26, 1958, on the day of the feast of the Holy Martyr Demetrius, Bishop Policarp Morușca fell asleep in the Lord. He was buried in the cemetery of the St. John the Baptist Monastery in Alba Iulia. Bishop Policarp Morușca was the author of several published works, among which are "Petru Maior and the Unification," "Feminism and Femininity in Light of the Gospel," "Bodrog Monastery," "The Behavior of the Christian in Church," "Christian Marriage," "The Orthodox Church in the Life of the Romanian Nation," etc.

V. The Situation of the Episcopate between 1939 and 1950

In July 1939, His Grace Policarp wanted to return to Romania to visit his family and to take part in the proceedings of the Holy Synod. Before he left, the Episcopate Congress took place; it elected a new Eparchial Council led by Fr. Simion Mihălțian from East Chicago, Indiana, with Fr. Andrei Moldovanu of Gary, Indiana, as secretary. At the beginning of August 1939, His Grace Policarp reached Romania; after just a few weeks, because of the outbreak of World War II, it became impossible for him to return to America. To this objective reason must be added the complaints against the bishop, sent to the Romanian Patriarchate and to the government of Romania both from within and outside the Romanian Orthodox community in the U.S., concerning the bishop's activity over the past four years. The war, and then the establishment of the communist regime in Romania, made it so that His Grace Policarp never returned to America. The repeated requests of the Eparchial Council, as well as the numerous interventions of the Holy Synod, were met with the same refusal by the authorities in Romania, first the monarchy, then the communists. In the absence of the bishop, the priests split into two camps competing for the leadership of the Episcopate. Fr. Simion Mihălțian, as the president of the Eparchial Council, was the one who led the Episcopate formally. The following period of time was a difficult one, marked by unrest and conflicts which resulted in the institutional decline of the Episcopate. Already, at the Episcopate Congress on September 1-2, 1940, Fr. Ioan Truția brought up the problem of the absence of the bishop. This was following correspondence with the representatives of Romania in Washington by which he volunteered himself as leader of the Episcopate.⁴ In his opinion, his pastoral experience in America, as well as the delicate situation of the Episcopate without a leader, indicated that he would be the solution. The Romanian ambassador in the U.S., Radu Irimescu, forwarded a memo to Patriarch Nicodim asking for the appointment of Fr. Truția at the head of the Episcopate, using Truția's justification.⁵ The Patriarch answered that the problem would be

discussed at the meeting of the Holy Synod in the fall of 1940. Thus at the Episcopate Congress in September 1940 there was no knowledge of any position of the Holy Synod concerning the absence of the bishop or his eventual replacement. Meanwhile, the situation of the Episcopate was deteriorating, as the priests and faithful took sides with the two camps: those who were leading the Episcopate, led by Fr. Simion Mihălțian, and those who opposed them, led by Fr. Ioan Truția. At the Congress of September 1945, the situation of the absence of His Grace Policarp was discussed again, and a decision was made to make an official request to Patriarch Nicodim to delegate Bishop Valerie Moglan to come to America to clarify the situation of the Episcopate. Bishop Valerie Moglan was considered to be the right person for this mission because he knew English and the mentality of the Romanian-Americans.⁶ This proposal did not materialize, probably because efforts were renewed for the return of Bishop Policarp, and also because protests against his return to America continued. Bishop Policarp recommenced correspondence with the priests in America, divided into the two camps. He understood the critical situation of the Episcopate and, in July 1946, he sent a memo to Patriarch Nicodim in which he asked that a bishop, himself or someone else who could save the Episcopate, be promptly sent to America.⁷ On July 24, 1946, the Eparchial Council assembled. A decision was made to inform Patriarch Nicodim that, should the return of His Grace Policarp not succeed, his chair would be declared vacant, and it would be the Eparchial Council's responsibility to recommend to the Holy Synod that a successor be named. Patriarch Nicodim decided that His Grace Policarp should return to America immediately. The news mobilized the opponents of Bishop Policarp again, so that Patriarch Nicodim received several letters expressing disagreement with the return of the bishop, and the recommendation of Archimandrite Teofil Ionescu from Paris for the position of bishop in America. Fr. Glicherie Moraru supported the same solution, but if that did not work, he offered himself to His Beatitude, Patriarch Nicodim, as bishop for America.⁸ At the meeting of the Holy Synod on December 14, 1946, a decision was made to return Bishop Policarp to America; but again this decision could not be fulfilled because of the Romanian authorities.

In early 1947 there was talk in Bucharest of sending a successor to America in the person of Bishop Antim Nica. The news arrived in America also, and the reaction of the Eparchial Council was without delay. They proposed the temporary appointment, for one year, of His Grace Teodor Scorobet, who had been a missionary in America and knew the situation there. His mission would be to restore unity in the Episcopate and to prepare for the election of a new titular Bishop. The response from Bucharest, which arrived through the Romanian Legation in Washington, stirred up much opposition. It announced the appointment, by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, at the proposal of Patriarch Nicodim, of Bishop Antim Nica as the Bishop of Romanians in America. On February 21, 1947, the Eparchial Council met to discuss the situation that had been created. Even former members were invited, those opposed to the leadership of the Episcopate, i.e. the Priests Truția and Stănilă. The appointment of Bishop Antim was considered an attempt of the Romanian authorities to impose a bishop without consulting the Council and its faithful, and was therefore unanimously rejected. At the special Congress of March 28, 1947, this decision was confirmed by the delegates of the parishes, together with the decision to revert to the Statutes of 1932 which stipulated a large measure of autonomy for the Episcopate, with the maintenance of canonical and spiritual links to the Church in Romania. Informed of what had happened, Patriarch Nicodim sent a letter in which he reminded them of his constant care for the Episcopate in America. In May 1947, the Holy Synod sent a list of candidates nominated for the bishop's throne in America, in concordance with the local desire for consultation. On the list were the following names: His Grace Antim Nica, the brother archimandrites Vasile and Haralambie Vasilachi, and Fr. Petre Șerpe, a member of the Patriarchate Council.⁹ This list, supplemented with the name of Archimandrite Teofil Ionescu, at the time abbot at the Vatra, was

presented to the Congress in July 1947. Still they were not able to elect another bishop; the old desire for the return of His Grace Policarp was reiterated.

At the next year's Congress, in 1948, the same position concerning the return of Bishop Policarp was maintained. Contacted by some priests of the Episcopate, Metropolitan Visarion Puiu intervened in the affairs of the Episcopate during 1949, ultimately appointing Priest Ștefan Opreanu as his vicar in America. The Congress of July 1950 disapproved this intrusion into Episcopate affairs and reaffirmed the position of Bishop Policarp. At the same time, the date of the next Congress, July 1951, was proposed as a deadline for the return of the Bishop. Probably they were not aware that Bishop Policarp had already been retired, even though it had been announced by authorities in Romania as early as July 15, 1948 and published in the Official Monitor.

Some of the priests and faithful of the Episcopate acted to resolve this extended crisis situation. Thus, on May 17, 1950, in Detroit, the Church Congress, although made up of only a minority of the representatives of the Romanian communities, elected the widowed Dean Fr. Andrei Moldovanu of Akron, Ohio, as titular bishop, and subsequently addressed the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church in this regard. They requested "complete autonomy in administrative affairs, and the election and ordination of an American citizen as bishop, respectively Fr. Andrei Moldovanu."¹⁰ At the meeting of the Holy Synod on July 12, 1950, these requests were approved and a decision was made to ordain Fr. Andrei Moldovanu¹¹ as soon as possible. The candidate was summoned to Romania to be ordained. The event took place on November 12, 1950, in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Sibiu. On November 19, 1950, the ceremony of investiture of the new Bishop Andrei was conducted by Patriarch Justinian. However, his ordination and installation as Bishop of the Romanians in America were not recognized and accepted by many parishes, resulting in the breaking apart of the Episcopate.

VI. His Grace Bishop Andrei Moldovanu

His Grace Bishop Andrei Moldovanu was born on July 15, 1885, in Apoldul de Sus. After elementary school, high school, and baccalaureate, he attended the Theological Academy in Sibiu, married young Valeria, and on November 11, 1911, was ordained to the priesthood in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Sibiu. His first parish was in Hendorf, and then in his native village Apoldul de Sus. During World War I he was a military chaplain, on the front with Romanian soldiers. In the spring of 1923, His Eminence Nicolae Bălan, Metropolitan of Transylvania, assigned him and 10 other priests as missionary priests in the United States. Here, Fr. Andrei was first assigned to the parish in Gary, Indiana, and then the Meeting of the Lord parish in Akron, Ohio. For 25 years he was a worthy shepherd, distinguishing himself among the outstanding priests in America, and being elected secretary of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate in America between 1939 and 1947, a time overshadowed by division and misunderstandings.

Elected on May 17, 1950, in Detroit, he was tonsured as a monk on November 5, the same year at the Neamț Monastery, and on November 12 he was ordained bishop in the Metropolitan Cathedral of Sibiu by His Eminence Nicolae, Metropolitan of Transylvania, His Grace Andrei of Arad, His Grace Nicolae of Cluj, and Their Graces Teoctist and Antim, Patriarchal Vicars.

On November 19, 1950, he was installed in the bishop's throne by Patriarchal Gramata, receiving the bishop's staff from His Beatitude Patriarch Justinian, and on November 21 he returned to American soil, as the second Bishop of the Missionary Episcopate of America and Canada. He was received with great joy in Windsor, Canada, at St. George cathedral; the ceremony was attended by priests and delegates of Romanian parishes, and a large crowd of the faithful. In the ensuing years, the dissensions and divisions that had been generated much earlier in the heart of the Romanian-American Orthodox community through personal ambitions and interests deepened, culminating in its division

into two, inasmuch as part of the clergy and faithful did not acknowledge Bishop Andrei as canonical successor of His Grace Policarp. Hard years followed, marked by quarrels and lawsuits, in which His Grace Andrei tried and largely succeeded to strengthen the natural canonical connection of the parishes and Romanian communities in North America, still true to the ancestral faith, with the Mother Church, and to continue the pastoral work started by the first Romanian missionary bishop in this region, His Grace Policarp Morușca. Thus, a new building was purchased for the episcopate in Detroit, Michigan, the publication of the Faith Calendar continued, new churches were consecrated both in America and Canada, and canonical links with other Orthodox Churches on the continent were developed and strengthened. Between September 22 and October 2, 1961, as a delegate of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, along with His Eminence Iustin Moisescu, Metropolitan of Moldova, the leader of the delegation, and other hierarchs and ecclesiastical personalities, Bishop Andrei participated in the proceedings of the Pan-Orthodox Conference in Rhodes.

He passed away on March 14, 1963 in Detroit, and he was buried in the Orthodox section of Woodlawn Cemetery in that city. An interim period followed, in which His Grace Teoctist Arăpașu was elected by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church to lead the destiny of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate in America and Canada for a while. On April 23, 1966, a special Episcopate Congress, which took place in Detroit, elected Archimandrite Victorin Ursache as Bishop, the election being approved by the Holy Synod on June 7 of the same year.

VII. His Eminence Archbishop Victorin Ursache

7.1 Biographical Details (1912 – 1955)

His Eminence Victorin Ursache was born on July 12, 1912, in the village of Mănăstioara-Siret, in Rădăuți County; his parents were Dumitru and Natalia, and he was the eldest of nine children. He attended elementary school in his native village (1919-1925), high school in Siret (1925-1932), and the Theological Institute in Cernăuți, where he also obtained his bachelor's degree in 1936. Later on, he continued his studies at the Biblical and Archaeological Institute in Jerusalem. In 1936, he worked as a professor of religion at the Orthodox high school in Cernăuți, and in 1937 as professor and vice-principal of the Seminary of Neamț Monastery. In 1937, he was tonsured a monk under the name of Victorin at the Neamț Monastery; then he was ordained hierodeacon and hieromonk, and subsequently in 1940 and 1942 he was elevated to the rank of protosinghelos and then archimandrite. Beginning in 1940 he worked as abbot of the Neamț and Secu Monasteries and principal of the Monastic Seminary. In the autumn of 1940 he was called as priest by the Bucur Church in Bucharest, and in December of the same year he was appointed as superior of the Romanian Endowment in Jerusalem. Due to the difficulties he encountered while dealing with formalities, he only arrived there in April 1947.

7.2 His Presence in the USA (1956 – 1966)

Archimandrite Victorin arrived in the United States of America in 1956, where he served in the parishes of the Romanian Missionary Episcopate of that time. Due to his outstanding theological education and to the fact that he spoke several foreign languages, including French, German, Greek and Arabic, he was appointed to teach Dogmatic, Moral and Pastoral Theology at the St. Tikhon Theological Seminary in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. His activity as a teacher, missionary and pedagogue would last 10 years.¹²

7.3 The Election, Ordination and Enthronement of His Grace Victorin

In response to the vacancy of the episcopal throne due to the death of Bishop Andrei Moldovanu in March 1963, a Church Congress was assembled only on April 23, 1966, at the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Detroit, Michigan, to choose a successor. The two proposed candidates were Archimandrite Victorin Ursache and Archdeacon Bartolomeu Anania. After Archdeacon Bartolomeu

declined the nomination, the Electoral Congress unanimously elected Archimandrite Victorin as bishop, the election remaining to be confirmed by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. At its meeting of June 6, 1966, the Canonical-Judiciary Committee, having determined that canonical and statutory requirements were fulfilled, proposed that the Holy Synod approve the elevation of Archimandrite Victorin to the rank of bishop. At the same time that it was decided that his ordination to the episcopate be officiated by Archbishop Iakovos, the Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in North and South America, and two other bishops under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Archbishop Epiphanius of Philadelphia and Archbishop Aristovoulos of Kyriakoupolis. The enthronement was to be presided over by His Eminence Nicolae, Metropolitan of Banat, as the representative of the Holy Synod. The ordination as bishop took place on August 7, 1966, at St. George Cathedral in Windsor, Ontario, and was officiated by the three bishops mentioned in conformity with the decision of the Synod, and with Archimandrite Nicolae Mladin, the future metropolitan, as the representative of the Romanian Patriarchate. The investiture and enthronement of the new bishop took place on August 21, 1966 in the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Detroit, Michigan, where the Patriarchal Gramata and the act of investiture were read in the presence of His Eminence Metropolitan Nicolae Corneanu.

7.4 The Elevation of the Missionary Episcopate to the Rank of Archdiocese (1974)

At its meeting of June 11, 1973, the Holy Synod decided to elevate His Grace Victorin to the rank of Archbishop. One year later, on December 12, 1974, through its decision Nr. 14079, the Holy Synod decided to elevate the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate to the rank of Archdiocese, with the title “The Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America.” Its autonomous status was confirmed again.¹³

7.5 Pastoral – Administrative Accomplishments

His Eminence Victorin’s entire pastoral activity was directed primarily toward spiritual issues. First of all, he distinguished himself by his exemplary life as a monk and the atmosphere of holiness he embodied. The complex personality of the Archbishop displayed a simplicity of life that was evident to all and an untiring missionary spirit.¹⁴

Archbishop Victorin’s administrative activity was distinguished in two main directions. One was the interior consolidation of the Diocese through its elevation to the rank of Archdiocese and the strengthening of its administrative autonomy; the other was his special care in preserving the privileged link with the Mother Church. In both of these areas His Eminence Victorin counted on the reliable help of his collaborators, among whom the closest were the then Archimandrites Bartolomeu Anania and Vasile Vasilachi. The former was in charge of Archdiocesan publications, which he raised to the high level of modern publications of the time. He was also the right hand of His Eminence Victorin in his work of reorganizing the parishes. Archimandrite Bartolomeu was also the Archdiocesan representative on the working Committees of the Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America, along with Archbishop Victorin.

The situation of the eparchy, as seen in the 2001 Credința (The Faith) Almanac, was as follows: U.S.—16 parishes and a hermitage; Canada—20 parishes; South America—one parish; priests—35; deacons—2; 2 associations: the Ladies’ Association (AROLA) and the Youth Association (ROYA).

7.6 His Passing on to the Lord in July 2001

Due to his advanced age, His Eminence Victorin’s last years as a bishop were marked by a progressive administrative and organizational crisis. On July 16, 2001, Archbishop Victorin passed on to the Lord at the venerable age of 89 years. He lay in state at the Holy Trinity Church in Troy, Michigan and was buried at the Putna Monastery. His funeral service took place on July 22, 2001, in the courtyard of Putna Monastery.

Here, summed up in a few words by Archimandrite Vasile Vasilachi, his close friend and confidante for three decades, is the personality of Archbishop Victorin: “For three decades, Archbishop Victorin was present at his residence in Detroit, and on each Sunday and on all holy days in one of the churches of his Eparchy, either in America or in Canada, across the length and breadth of the North American continent, at distances of hundreds or thousands of miles. He never took into account the distances, but rather his love of being close to his beloved priests and faithful. This great Christian event causes him to be seen by all the faithful, old and young, men and women, all of whom come to see their hierarch, to receive his Christian teachings and to be blessed by him as if by an apostle, as St. Ignatius Theophorus says, *in the presence of Christ.*”¹⁵

7.7 The Interim Period

As early as 1999 the Eparchial Council had begun to study the possibility of resolving the acute crisis of hierarchical authority, which was becoming more and more obvious. The solution proposed was the election of a Vicar Bishop. At its meeting of June 13-14, 2000, according to item Nr. 3079/2000, the Holy Synod decided to delegate His Grace Teofan of Sinaia, Patriarchal Vicar Bishop and Secretary of the Holy Synod, to participate in the Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada. The recognition of the inexistence of a functional eparchial chancellery and the lack of a relationship between the Archdiocese leadership and the clergy of the eparchy was becoming more and more hurtful and could only be remedied by the retirement of Archbishop Victorin, by declaring the Archbishop’s throne vacant, and by creating adequate conditions for the election of a new Archbishop. In its sessions of October 4, 2000, and February 22, 2001, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church recommended the retirement of His Eminence Victorin from his Archbishop’s throne to the Putna Monastery, where he had been tonsured into monasticism, and the assignment of His Grace Teofan as locum tenens of the Archdiocese, to be followed shortly by His Eminence Iosif of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis of Western and Southern Europe. He would take on the role of organizing the Electoral Congress for the occupancy of the Archbishop’s throne for the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada.

VIII. His Eminence Archbishop Dr. Nicolae Condrea

8.1 Biographic Details

His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae Condrea was born in the city of Constanța on April 15, 1967, to his parents Nicolae and Victoria, both now asleep in the Lord. He attended elementary school in his native city between 1973 and 1981. He attended the first two years of high school at the Mathematics-Physics High School in Constanța, after which he transferred to the Metrology High School in Bucharest, where he obtained his baccalaureate in 1985. After he graduated from high school, he did his mandatory military service in 1985-1986.

Feeling the call toward the priesthood and the monastic vocation growing stronger and stronger, he decided to answer this call and follow this vocation. In 1988 he was admitted to the Andrei Șaguna Orthodox Faculty of Theology in Sibiu, which at that time was the only school to admit high school graduates. After four successful years he defended his degree in theology with the dissertation, “The Eucharistic Ecclesiology of Metropolitan John Zizioulas.” Starting in May 1993, having successfully passed the doctoral entrance examination, Fr. Nicolae attended doctoral classes until 1994 under the supervision of his adviser, the V. Rev. Fr. Prof. Dr. Ilie Moldovan; during that time, he wrote the following seminar papers:

- 1) The Collective Unconscious in C.G. Jung’s Works, Seen from the Point of View of Orthodox Moral Theology.
- 2) Self-Cognition according to the *Ladder* of St. John of Sinai.

3) The Sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the faithful according to St. Cyril of Alexandria.

Between 1992 and 1994 he taught Religion in Bucharest, where he had moved after high school. In 1994 he received a scholarship to the Marc Bloch University in Strasbourg, where he attended the Faculty of Catholic Theology and finished a graduate degree in June 1995. Between 1995 and 2001 he attended doctoral classes at the same Faculty where, on November 10, 2001, he defended his Ph.D. dissertation entitled "*Matters of Psychology in the Works of Evagrius Ponticus*" and obtained the degree of Doctor in Theology. During his years of study, in order to combine theory and practice, study and priestly ministry, he decided to enter the clergy and was ordained in the spring of 1997 first as a deacon, then as a celibate priest, by His Eminence Metropolitan Serafim of Germany and Central Europe, with whose benediction he then established and served the parish of the Nativity of the Lord in Stuttgart, Germany. Thus, his missionary activity among Romanians from Stuttgart and its environs combined serving God with serving people. In the same time period, Fr. Nicolae was the representative of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the Dialogue Committee for European Integration of the Conference of European Churches (Brussels). After receiving the prestigious academic title at the end of his graduate studies, Fr. Nicolae returned to Romania where, on December 18, 2001, he took his monastic vows at the Radu Vodă Monastery in Bucharest. From then until he came to America, he was patriarchal secretary.

8.2 His Election, Ordination, and Investiture

The priests and lay delegates of the Special Electoral Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada, held on March 9, 2002, at the Holy Trinity parish of Troy, Michigan, elected Fr. Nicolae Condrea for the vacant throne of Archbishop. Thus ended a process which had lasted many years, having begun with the retirement and then the falling asleep of His Eminence Archbishop Victorin. His Eminence Teofan, Metropolitan of Oltenia, and then His Eminence Iosif, of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolis for Western and Southern Europe, had in turn been locum tenens in the Archbishop's throne. With the blessing of His Beatitude Patriarch Teoctist, a Special Committee, consisting of 6 priests, had been created to find suitable candidates. Many names were mentioned, and many discussions took place, until finally two names remained as possible candidates: The Rev. Protosinghelos Nicolae Condrea and the Rev. Hieromonk Ioan Casian Tunaru. The electoral committee proposed these two names to the Eparchial Council assembled in September 2001, and the Council approved the work of the Committee and recommended the convocation of the Special Electoral Congress for the election of the Archbishop. The Congress was led by His Eminence Metropolitan Iosif. After several rounds of voting, the 109 delegates elected Fr. Nicolae Condrea. At its meeting of March 13, 2002, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church unanimously validated the election, and conferred on Fr. Nicolae the rank of Archimandrite.

The ordination and investiture of the new Archbishop-Elect took place at the 71st Annual Congress of the Archdiocese, hosted by St. John the Baptist parish in Montreal, Canada between July 12th and 14th, 2002. His Beatitude Patriarch Teoctist, accompanied by an important delegation of hierarchs, priests, deacons and media representatives, presided over the ceremonies. Included in the sobor of hierarchs who celebrated the Divine Liturgy and the ordination of the newly elected hierarch were His Eminence Sotirios, Greek Orthodox Metropolitan of Canada, His Eminence Theodosius, Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), Their Eminences Metropolitans Teofan of Oltenia, Serafim of Germany and Northern and Central Europe, and Iosif of Western and Southern Europe, His Eminence Nathaniel, Archbishop of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America under OCA jurisdiction, His Grace Bishop Nicholas of the Greek Diocese of Detroit, His Grace Bishop Seraphim of Ottawa (OCA), and His Grace Bishop Ioan of Covasna and Harghita. In addition to these were the clergy of the Archdiocese, as well as priests and deacons invited from Romania and

representatives of other Orthodox jurisdictions in America. The presence of His Beatitude Patriarch Teoctist and of the hierarchs, members of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church and of the sister Orthodox Churches, accentuated the importance of this historic event, which marked the beginning of a new page in the history of the Archdiocese.

8.3 Moving the Eparchial Center from Detroit to Chicago

One of the missionary and administrative priorities of the new Archbishop was to find an appropriate Eparchial Center. This idea was already being discussed, given the unsuitable situation of the residence of His Eminence Archbishop Victorin in Detroit. After long, heated discussions concerning historical continuity and a vision for the future, it was decided to move the Eparchial Center to Chicago. The most important reasons considered in making this decision were the pastoral and spiritual needs of Romanian Orthodox faithful in Chicago, the easy access to this metropolis from all areas of the Archdiocese, and the opportunity for a better organization of the mission and administration of the Archdiocese, starting from the support of the local community. The need for an administrative and mission center for the Archdiocese was thus added on to the idea for the establishment of a new parish in Chicago, an idea that had been discussed in the Eparchial Council and Congress as early as 2001.

The first steps taken concerned finding a temporary place of worship. Between December 2002 and May 2003, this was located in the chapel of the Holy Trinity Greek parish in Chicago. Meanwhile, inquiries continued in view of finding a property suitable for the pastoral, missionary, and administrative vision of the Archdiocese. At the February 2003 meeting of the Eparchial Council, discussion took place and approval was given to begin negotiations for the purchase of a Presbyterian Church on North Keeler Ave. When the purchase of this church did not go through, the search continued. With God's help, property was found on North Newland Avenue, which at that time was being used as a Korean Presbyterian Church. The July 2003 Archdiocesan Congress decided to purchase this property for the new Eparchial Center and Archdiocesan Cathedral. Months of fundraising campaigns and pursuing bank financing followed. The parishes of the Archdiocese and many of the faithful got involved in the action, and the important part played by Dr. Constantin Izvănariu in the achievement of this project must be mentioned. On December 9, 2003, the purchase documents were signed, and thus Christmas Day 2003 was celebrated in our own Church.

8.4 The Consecration of Saints Constantine and Helen Cathedral, Chicago, July 2008

In the following years, the Cathedral was beautified in conformity with the standards of the Orthodox Church. An iconostasis made in Romania was installed; three stained glass windows representing the patron saints, Ss. Constantine and Helen, as well as the Mother of God and St. Nicholas were ordered and installed; the balcony was adorned with icons of the Romanian saints. In the Eparchial Center, classrooms for children, offices, a conference room, a library and an archive room were set up. Intense effort was directed toward creating a large social hall for dinners and other events of the Chicago community and of the Archdiocese. The event of the consecration of the Cathedral was carefully prepared, with other necessary work being accomplished. The consecration of Ss. Constantine and Helen Cathedral took place at the end of the 76th Congress of the Archdiocese, on July 6, 2008. Among the celebrants were His Eminence Laurențiu, Metropolitan of Transylvania, delegate of His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel; His Eminence Christopher, Metropolitan of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the U.S.; His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas of the Greek Metropolis of Detroit, His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae, and His Grace Auxiliary Bishop Irineu of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. Also present were the priests of the Archdiocese, Congress delegates, Romanian Orthodox faithful from Chicago, and other guests.

8.5 Pastoral-Administrative Events and Achievements

The first thing that bears mentioning is the event of the ordination of His Grace Bishop Ioan Casian of Vicina as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese at the July 2006 Congress. Then the project of the revision of the Statutes of the Archdiocese, an important undertaking which occupied the time and attention of the Eparchial Council for several years. Already at the Eparchial Congress of 2003 a commission had been established to work on a draft of the new Statutes. The main person responsible for the project was Fr. Nicholas Apostola, the Eparchial Secretary for many years. The Archdiocesan Statutes that were in effect were those adopted upon the arrival of the first Romanian bishop in America, His Grace Policarp Morușca. Over the years, the “Policarp Statutes” were amended by many congresses. It was absolutely necessary to draw up new Statutes which would respect the spirit of the old ones, but also reflect the missionary, pastoral and administrative realities of the Archdiocese of the 2000s.

At the 2005 Congress in Boian/Edmonton, Alberta, the draft of the new Statutes was presented and discussed. Observations were taken into consideration and the next year, at the 2006 Congress, the project was discussed again chapter by chapter and approved. The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, in its February 13, 2007 session, ratified the new Statutes of the Archdiocese, which was now called “The Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas.” The name change was justified by the need to specify exactly the extent of the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese over the two American continents. In their entirety, the Statutes use the language appropriate to the new pastoral missionary realities and bring necessary clarification to the administrative organization of the Archdiocese. The activities of the Archdiocese are carried out on several levels:

- pastoral-missionary
- administrative
- catechetical
- inter-Orthodox and ecumenical.

The primary domain of the Archdiocese’s activity is in the **pastoral-missionary** realm. This involves the organization of the mission to Orthodox Romanians in the Americas, the descendants of the first Romanian immigrants of more than 100 years ago, now in its 3rd or 4th generation, and to all those affiliated with the Archdiocese by marriage or conversion. Practically, this mission is accomplished by the continuation of the ministry of the old parishes and the organization of new parishes for Romanian immigrants who have recently arrived on the North American and South American continents. Hierarchical pastoral visits include not only the scheduled Church services, but also meetings with the parish councils and other parish leaders. The next organizational level is that of the Deanery. According to the new Bylaws, the clergy and parish delegates meet every two years in a Deanery Assembly to discuss the problems of the parishes. The biennial Congress is the supreme forum of discussion and the decision-making body with regard to the pastoral-missionary activity of the Archdiocese. On this missionary level a recent academic initiative must also be mentioned, that of the “Symposium of Romanian Orthodox Spirituality,” an outreach to non-Orthodox university students and faculty. This is how we fulfill our mission of presenting Romanian and Orthodox spirituality and traditions in American universities.

The **administrative** level of our Archdiocesan ministry has to do with the good organization of our parishes and auxiliary organizations. All the parishes work on verifying the documents necessary for their proper functioning and forwarding these documents to the Eparchial Center.

The **catechetical** level concerns the catechism of children and young people in particular, but also of adults in general. Every parish has a Sunday School for children, catechetical activities for young people, and Bible study classes for adults. At the Archdiocesan level, religious camps for children and young adults are organized.

The **inter-Orthodox and ecumenical** level refers to the presence of the Archdiocese in several inter-Orthodox and inter-Christian organizations. Our Archdiocese has been a founding member of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of America (SCOBA) since 1961. His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae and His Grace Vicar Bishop Ioan Casian are members of the Canadian Conference of Orthodox Bishops. The two hierarchs are members of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America, an organization founded as a follow-up of the decisions of the fourth Pan-Orthodox Pre-Synodal Conference which took place at the center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambesey, Switzerland, on June 6-12, 2009. Besides representing Orthodox Romanians from the U.S. in this Assembly, His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae also occupies the position of Chairman of the Committee for Canonical Regional Planning. His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae is a member of the Committees for Dialogue with Roman Catholic Bishops both in the U.S. and in Canada. This representation has to do not only with the organization of meetings at the respective levels, but also of inter-Orthodox and inter-Christian activities.

IX. His Grace Vicar Bishop Ioan Casian of Vicina

9.1 Biographic Details

His Grace Ioan Casian of Vicina was born on February 20, 1969, in the town of Comănești, county of Bacău; his parents were the Priest Ioan and his wife Mariana, and he was baptized Livius-Ionel. In 1975-1983, he attended elementary school, and then in 1983-1987, the industrial high school with a concentration in Mathematics and Physics. In 1989-1993, he attended the Andrei Șaguna Faculty of Theology in Sibiu, graduating with his dissertation in Canon Law entitled “Economia in the Orthodox Church,” under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Ioan Floca. During his academic years, he came into contact with the currents of the renewal of spiritual and theological life whose representative at that time was His Grace Vicar Bishop Serafim Joantă. Between 1993 and 1995 he was at the St. John the Baptist Monastery in Jerusalem, where he received the first elements of monastic formation. At the same time he took courses in Ancient Greek at the Flagelazione Pontifical Institute (Jerusalem), in French at the Alliance Française Institute for French Language and Culture (Jerusalem), and an introduction to the techniques of icon painting and restoration. In 1995, he was tonsured a rasophore with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Serafim of Germany, Central and North Europe. Between 1995 and 1998, having received an academic excellence scholarship from a group of 20 Catholic monasteries, he took courses at the St. Anselm of Canterbury Pontifical University (Rome)—The School of History and Monastic and Patristic Spirituality, and the Oriental Pontifical Institute, majoring in History, Art, and Classical Languages (Ancient Greek and Latin). He graduated with the thesis, “The Road to Liberty: A Study of St. Maximus the Confessor’s Commentary on the Lord’s Prayer.” His advisers were Jeremy Driscoll and Maciej Bielawski. At the same time, he also did internships in several monasteries in Europe: the Exaltation of the Holy Cross Benedictine Monastery (Chevetogne, Belgium), the St. Dominic of Silos Benedictine monastery (Burgos, Spain) and the monastic community of Bose (Italy). During his studies he attended the newly established St. John Cassian Romanian Orthodox parish (Rome), and helped with chanting.

At the completion of his studies he was called to Paris by His Eminence Iosif, Metropolitan of Western and Southern Europe, functioning as administrative secretary until 2002. During the same period he led the parish choir of Saint Parascheva-Saint Genevieve (Paris), which held several concerts in Amiens, Paris (Notre Dame Greek Cathedral), UNESCO, and Neuilly. He was editor-translator of the St. John Cassian journal. On June 23, 2001, he was ordained deacon and the next day priest, assigned to the Monastery of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Malvialle, France). On November 1, 2001, he received the monastic tonsure (Little Schema) in the same monastery. He spent a short period

in the monastery of St. John the Baptist (Maldon, Essex, England). Between the years 2002-2003 he was parish priest of St. Joseph in Bordeaux, where he delivered several lectures on the theme, “Major Holidays of the Church Year in the Orthodox Church” for the Ogivky Association of Christian Art and Iconography, and held a Bible workshop on several biblical texts. From April 2003 to June 2006 he was the parish priest of St. Nicholas Romanian Orthodox parish in New York (U.S.), where he was also editor of the parish journal. He delivered a series of conferences and catechetical talks inspired by the Lenten Gospels (Fasting and its Significance, Orthodoxy, Prayer, About the Holy Cross, Steps of the Spiritual Life). He was in charge of the St. Demetrius the New Monastery (Middletown, New York), continuing the effort for the development of this monastic and community center which had been started by Archimandrite Dr. Mitrophoros Vasile Vasilachi and the St. Nicholas parish in New York. He organized a memorial room in honor of Fr. Vasilachi, the founder of this institution, and started construction of the monastery church. He initiated an Orthodox summer camp for Romanian children in the metropolitan area of New York, the Eastern U.S. and Canada in 2004-2007. In 2004, he received the title of protosinghelos.

9.2 The Election, Ordination and Investiture of His Grace Ioan Casian of Vicina

At the proposal of His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae and with the approval of the Eparchial Council, Fr. Protosinghelos Ioan Casian was nominated for the position of Vicar Bishop. In its March 2, 2006 session, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church elected Fr. Ioan Casian Tunaru for the position of Vicar Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada, with the title “of Vicina.” On July 2, 2006, on the occasion of the Archdiocesan Congress, he was ordained at the Ss. Constantine and Helen Cathedral in Chicago. Participating in the ordination were His Eminence Iosif, Metropolitan of the Western and Southern Europe Romanian Metropolis, His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae, and His Grace Vicar Bishop Siluan of Marseille, from the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. From the other jurisdictions in North America were His Eminence Christopher, Metropolitan of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North and South America, His Eminence Nicholas of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit, and His Grace Peter of Cleveland of the Russian Orthodox Church outside Russia. His investiture and enthronement took place on Sunday July 9, 2006, at the St. Demetrius the New Monastery (Middletown, New York) in the presence of His Eminence Metropolitan Iosif and His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae. Since then, he has conducted his pastoral-missionary activity especially in the Romanian parishes along the East coast of the U.S. and Canada. He continued the building of the new church of the St. Demetrius the New Monastery (Middletown, New York) and the project of painting icons for the St. Nicholas parish in New York. He has held several lectures: at the St. John the Merciful parish (Toronto), three lectures inspired by the thinking of St. Silouan— “St. Silouan of Athos and Orthodox Thinking,” “St. Silouan and the Work of the Breaking of the Heart,” “Humility and Love in the Thinking of St. Silouan of Athos and Their Reflection in Liturgical and Iconographic Tradition;” at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary (New York) he gave a lecture on “The Mission of the Historian in the Church.” At the Annual Symposium organized by the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas he has presented several papers, among which “St. John Chrysostom’s Homily on the Transfiguration: Structural Analysis, Meaning and Significance.” At McGill University (Montreal) he gave a lecture on “Contemporary Issues of Life and Organization of the Orthodox Church,” and at the symposium dedicated to the personality of Archimandrite Vasile Vasilachi, he presented “The Threefold Love for God, Church and Nation: Archimandrite Vasile Vasilachi - a Creed of Life.”

X. The Relationship of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese with the Mother Church

If relations between the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America and Canada and the Mother Church were only sporadic, with exchanges of occasional telegrams and letters during the inter-war years and beyond, once His Eminence Archbishop Victorin was installed these would take a new turn, as visits from Mother Church hierarchs were more frequent on different occasions in the life of the faithful of our Archdiocese, as we shall see. In June 1976, after a 10-year hiatus, a delegation from the Holy Synod arrived, consisting of Metropolitan Teoctist of Oltenia, Metropolitan Nicolae of Banat, Bishop Vasile of Oradea, and Fr. N. Cazacu, cabinet secretary of Patriarch Justinian. They took part in the patron feast day of the new church in Troy, Michigan, traveling on to Montreal, where they participated in the patron feast celebration of St. John the Baptist Church on June 18, 1976. It was the eve of the Montreal Olympic Games, and after being cordially received at City Hall, at the House of Commons in Montreal, the capital of Quebec Province, and by the Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, Metropolitan Teoctist received approval from the Mayor of Montreal, Jean Drapeau, to bless the Olympic stadium and village. It was in this stadium that Nadia Comăneci became “the queen of the Olympic Games.”

Continuing the thread of relations between the Eparchy of America and Canada and the Romanian Orthodox Church, in 1978 again a delegation of the Mother Church participated in the “Great Blessing” of St. John the Baptist Church in Montreal. Previously, Bishop Vasile of Oradea had ordained Priest Ioan Ioniță, a young theologian from Chicago. Leading the delegation was Teoctist, Metropolitan of Moldova and Suceava, accompanied by Metropolitan Nicolae of Banat, Bishop Vasile of Oradea and Prof. Aurel Jivi of the Theological Institute in Sibiu. Deep and vivid memories remained from May 14, 1978, the day the Mayor of Montreal, together with his wife, walked through the Holy Altar. When leaving, they exclaimed, “Quelle belle eglise” (What a beautiful church), and the faithful, most of whom were seeing a traditional church consecration for the first time, marveled and wondered whether they were in heaven or on earth. The year 1979, a jubilee year for the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese on the North American continent, 50 years since its founding, was also to bring for the first time to the new world the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church himself, in the person of His Beatitude Dr. Iustin Moiescu, together with an impressive delegation of bishops, priests and deacons. In Detroit, Windsor, Hamilton and Montreal, Patriarch Iustin was warmly received by the faithful of the Romanian Archdiocese and not only by them. Patriarch Iustin celebrated the Divine Liturgy in Detroit and Montreal, and was received in a courtesy visit by the Premier of Quebec, René Leveque, by the governor of Canada, Ed Schreyer, and in the U.S. by President Jimmy Carter. Once again the good and lasting relationship between the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of America and Canada and the Mother Church brought positive results at yet another level than the strictly religious one.

The visits of hierarchs, theology professors, and priests from the patriarchal administration continued through the closing decades of the past century; one last visit was that of Metropolitan Daniel of Moldova and Bucovina, who at the invitation of the community of St. John the Baptist of Montreal, took part in its 25th anniversary in May 1999. Metropolitan Daniel, presently Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, visited the cities of Montreal, Quebec City, and Ottawa, Canada’s capital; he met with Archbishop Cardinal Jean Claude Turcotte of Montreal, and conveyed to the Romanian faithful the blessings of the Mother Church and the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. In September 1999 the visit of His Eminence Metropolitan Iosif of Western and Southern Europe to parishes in Troy and Cleveland also took place.

The third millennium and the 21st century look even more promising in terms of keeping good relationships between the Mother Church and our Eparchy in the Americas. After the falling asleep in the Lord of Archbishop Victorin of thrice-blessed memory, the new Archbishop Nicolae Condrea was

ordained and enthroned. His Beatitude Patriarch Teoctist took part in the joy of the clergy and faithful of our Archdiocese in America and Canada, leading an impressive delegation of hierarchs, priests and deacons, in addition to the other hierarchs, priests and deacons from the continent. A sobor of 10 hierarchs—the Patriarch, metropolitans and bishops—together with the multitude of the faithful exclaimed “He is worthy,” ordaining and enthroning the new Archbishop of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas. The ordination of His Grace Ioan Casian in Chicago in July 2006 was also blessed with the participation of Romanian hierarchs, respectively His Eminence Metropolitan Iosif and His Grace Vicar Bishop Siluan, both from France. In December 2007, His Eminence Metropolitan Serafim of Germany and Central Europe visited the parish of St. Nicholas in New York and the Eparchial Center in Chicago. His Eminence Laurențiu, Metropolitan of Transylvania, represented His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel at the consecration of the Ss. Constantine and Helen Cathedral in Chicago, in July 2008.

Yet the relationship with the Mother Church also refers to the participation of the hierarchs of our Archdiocese in the meetings of the Holy Synod and in significant events in the life of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The changes that took place in 1990 gave Archbishop Victorin the possibility to participate more regularly in the sessions of the Holy Synod. In 1995, Archbishop Victorin, together with a delegation from the Archdiocese, attended the anniversaries of the Romanian Patriarchate: 110 years of Autocephaly and 70 years since its elevation to the rank of Patriarchate. In October 1999, Archbishop Victorin took part in the feast of the patron saint of the Patriarchal Cathedral in Bucharest, St. Demetrius the New.

His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae and His Grace Vicar Bishop Ioan Casian participate regularly in the meetings of the Holy Synod. In October 2005, His Eminence Nicolae took part in the anniversaries of the Romanian Patriarchate, 120 years of Autocephaly and 80 years since its elevation to the rank of Patriarchate. Those celebrations were enhanced by the presence of His Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. Together, the two hierarchs of our Archdiocese participated in events related to the election and enthronement of the sixth Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, His Beatitude Daniel, in September-October 2007. Archbishop Nicolae also attended the celebration of the re-consecration of the Patriarchal Cathedral in Bucharest in October 2008.

If at its beginnings and then until the 1970s and 1980s the exchanges between our Archdiocese and the Mother Church were rather infrequent and timid, after the 1990s, with the changes that took place in Romania, the relationship between the two entities has found its normal and natural path, as expected in the canonical order of the universal Orthodox Church and of our Mother Church. It must be mentioned and emphasized that in relations between the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas and the Mother Church over the past 37 years, the Decree of Autonomy, decision Nr. 14079 of December 12, 1974, has prevailed, providing and ensuring total autonomy for the Archdiocese.

XI. The Situation of Romanians in South America

11.1 The First Signs of Romanian Presence

Under the canonical jurisdiction of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas there also are two Romanian Orthodox parishes in South America. The first news of the presence of a Romanian Orthodox priest in South America comes from 1933, when Patriarch Miron Cristea sent Fr. Mihai Petrovici to Argentina to see the situation of Orthodox Romanians there. His report, published in the *Universul* (The Universe) newspaper on December 5, 1933, showed that in Argentina there were around 30,000 Romanians. In its decision on July 12, 1950, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church approved the autonomy of “The Autonomous Episcopate of the Romanians of North and South America,” reaffirmed by the Synod’s Decision of Autonomy Nr. 14079 of December 12, 1974, when

it also approved the decision of the Congress to elevate the Episcopate to the rank of Archdiocese (July 21, 1973). Through this Synodal Decision of Autonomy, the Statutes of the Episcopate were renewed, with provisions including: “The jurisdictional territory of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America ... includes the U.S., Canada, South America and the Pacific Area.”

11.2 The First Romanian Parish in South America - Caracas, Venezuela

The first signs of Romanians in Venezuela before World War I were sporadic. They continued in the interwar period, becoming accentuated through a significant presence in the years 1950-1960. Then Mr. Corneliu Popescu and Mr. Gheorghe Balosin, among others, came to Venezuela as political refugees. The Sts. Constantine & Helen Romanian Orthodox Parish was established in 1968 at the initiative of Fr. Costică Popa. Here, through the efforts of the priest and the faithful, a wooden church in Maramureş style was built, being consecrated in November 1999 by His Beatitude Patriarch Teoctist of Romania of thrice-blessed memory. The parish church reflects a combination of Byzantine and Western elements. What is religiously significant in this church is the balance achieved between tradition and modernity. This church may be considered an image of Romanian Orthodoxy, “a beautiful expression of permanence in time”. Among the icons in the church a special place is occupied by the icon Virgen de Coromoto, the patron saint of Venezuela. A spiritual bonding factor of the Christian community in Caracas is the Conference of Historical Churches which includes the three major Christian religions: Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant. Among its members, along with the Catholic Church and Romanian Orthodox Church, are the following member churches: Antiochian, Armenian, Maronite, Melkite, Greek, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Syrian, and Coptic. The Romanian parish has been a part of this ecumenical organization from the beginning.

On March 8, 2007, Fr. Vasile Lungeanu was appointed parish priest. On November 15, 2009, the tenth anniversary of the consecration of the Church was celebrated with the participation of political, diplomatic, ecclesiastical, and cultural personalities. On March 9, 2010, the church became part of Venezuela’s national heritage and was officially opened as a museum of art. The primary future goals are building a Romanian Cultural Center and a park dedicated to Romanian-Venezuelan friendship.

According to statistics, there are approximately 10,000 people of Romanian origin who have settled in Venezuela. Urban centers where there are Romanian communities include Caracas, Puerto la Cruz, Macaray, Macaraibo and Puerto Ordaz. In Caracas, according to official statistics, there are about 500 Romanian immigrants, most of them of the Orthodox faith.

11.3 The St. Andrew Parish in Buenos Aires, Argentina

In Argentina there are approximately 10,000 people of Romanian origin, most of them concentrated in Buenos Aires and in smaller groups in Mendoza, La Plata, Cordoba and Rosario. Immediately after World War II many Romanian Orthodox people came to Argentina; some of them were former Legionnaires, including also a priest, Fr. Palaghiță, who founded a Romanian church. After his death, several missionary priests came along. A group of intellectuals from the new wave of emigrants took the initiative to found the Romanian Community Association in Argentina. The association was registered with the Argentine authorities on October 28, 2000. On the feast of the Nativity in 2000, Fr. Mircea Alexă Uță, patriarchal councilor for the External Communities Department of the Romanian Patriarchate, visited the Romanian community in Buenos Aires and asked His Eminence Gennadios Chrysoulakis, the Greek Archbishop and Metropolitan of Buenos Aires for help in establishing a Romanian parish in Buenos Aires. On June 27, 2003, the Romanian Patriarchate issued a document (Nr. 2625/2003) showing that, at the request of the Romanian Orthodox faithful in Argentina, a Romanian Orthodox Parish was established in Buenos Aires, enjoying all the rights provided by the sacred canons and the laws of the Romanian Orthodox Church. This parish is in

spiritual and canonical relationship with the Romanian Patriarchate through the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada. In January 2010, the registration of the Romanian Orthodox Christian Association and the Romanian Orthodox Christian Faith was officially recognized in the National Register of Religious Affairs of Argentina.

12. The founding of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas and the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada

From July 1-3, 2016, the 80th Congress of the Archdiocese took place at the Resurrection of the Lord Parish, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. The Congress adopted historical decisions for the organization of the Romanian Orthodox in the Americas, respectively:

a. Proposal to establish the *Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada*, based in St-Hubert / Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

b. The proposal to establish the *Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas*, comprised of two dioceses: the *Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States of America* and the *Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada*.

c. The Draft *Statutes of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas*, prepared in compliance with the applicable canonical, statutory and regulatory provisions, as well as the specific American legislation.

d. The Draft *Statutes of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada*, prepared in compliance with the applicable canonical, statutory, and regulatory provisions, as well as the specific Canadian legislation.

e. The proposal to elevate the Romanian Orthodox Archbishop of the Americas to the dignity of Metropolitan.

f. The nomination of His Grace Bishop Vicar Ioan Casian of Vicina for the office of Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada.

These decisions of the Hamilton Congress were confirmed by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church at its meeting of October 28-29, 2016. The elevation of the Romanian Orthodox Archbishop of the Americas to the dignity of Metropolitan took place in the Patriarchal Cathedral of Bucharest on October 30, 2016. The enthronement ceremonies of the new Metropolitan and the Romanian Orthodox Bishop of Canada took place on April 30, 2017 in Chicago, and May 7, 2017 in Montreal, respectively.

¹ Protopop Vicar Ioan Bugariu, *1929-1979 Episcopia (Arhiepiscopia) Misionară Ortodoxă Română din America și Canada la Aniversarea de 50 de ani* în *Calendarul Crediința*, Editat de Arhiepiscopia Misionară Ortodoxă Română în America și Canada, 1979, p. 75.

² Bishop Policarp, *The Missionary Episcopate and Romanians in America*, in B.O.R., 1940, no. 7-8, pp. 538, 550.

³ His Speech upon being ordained bishop.

⁴ MAE Archive, Fond Washington, vol. 94.

⁵ Idem, Memoir of Minister Radu Irimescu to Patriarch Nicodim, July 26th, 1940.

⁶ Archive of the Holy Synod, File 594/1946, Address of Protopop Glicherie Moraru to Patriarch Nicodim, September 18th, 1946.

⁷ Idem, File 594/1946.

⁸ Idem, File 594/1946, Glicherie Moraru to Patriarch Nicodim, November 25th, 1946.

⁹ Idem, File 610/1947.

¹⁰ Idem, File 326/1965.

¹¹ Idem, File 28bis/1950.

¹² Jerome Newville, *The 1966 Ecclesiastic Congress of The Missionary Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America*, Credința Almanac (1967), pp. 211 – 212.

¹³ Address of the Romanian Patriarchate no.10728/1994:

YOUR EMINENCE:

With brotherly love we inform you that at our meeting of December 12, 1974, The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church has examined Your Eminence's address No. 219/1973, concerning the decision made by the annual Congress of that Archdiocese of July 21st, 1973, to elevate the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate to the rank of Archdiocese.

It must be taken into account that this decision has been made by the Ecclesiastical Congress, in relation with the necessities of the religious life of the Episcopate, and as an outcome of the decision of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church of June 11th, 1973, by which His Eminence Victorin has been made Archbishop.

Considering the canonical rules and the established practice of Orthodox Churches concerning the administrative organization of Dioceses according to the rank of their leaders; and following discussions and explanations of the issue in question, given by His Beatitude Patriarch Justinian, at the motion of the Canonical, Juridical and Disciplinary Committee, the Holy Synod has decided:

--It acknowledges the decision of the Annual Ecclesiastical Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate of July 21st, 1973, and approves the elevation of that Diocese to the rank of Archdiocese, with the official title of, "The Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America".

--It recommends to the Ecclesiastical Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America to proceed to the modification of the Bylaws for the organization of that Archdiocese, which can stipulate the creation of a position of a Vicar-Bishop.

Also, in the same assembly, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church has examined the address of Your Eminence No. 163/1973 and the précis of December 10th, 1974 of Fr. Archimandrite Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania, regarding the issue of autonomy of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America.

The Holy Synod Plenary, ascertaining that it was necessary that the decision of the Permanent Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church of July 12th, 1950, which defined at the respective time the autonomous statute of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate in America, be rounded up and reformulated to reflect the elevation to the rank of Archdiocese of that Eparchy;

Also, taking into consideration Your Eminence's motions from the address No. 163/1973 and those from the précis of December 10th, 1974, of Fr. Archimandrite Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania;

At the motion of the Canonical, Juridical and Disciplinary Committee, the Holy Synod has decided:

-- The Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America is and remains an autonomous Eparchy.

-- The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, based on the decision of the Permanent Synod of July 12th, 1950 and on the address No. 163 of June 8th, 1973 of His Eminence Archbishop Victorin, acknowledges and renews this Status of autonomy as follows:

1. The jurisdictional territory of The Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America over Orthodox parishes with church-goers of Romanian origin—or affiliated by faith or kinship—encompasses the United States of America, Canada, South America and the Pacific Area.

2. The Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America leads itself by its own bylaws and regulations, with no outside interference, while keeping canonical, dogmatic, and spiritual links with the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church—from which it shall receive the Holy and Great Chrism—in accordance with the holy canons and the hierarchic structure of the Orthodox Church of the East.

3. The Archbishop is elected by the Ecclesiastical Congress of the Eparchy, consisting of clerical and lay delegates, according both to the stipulations of the Archdiocese Bylaws, and the laws of the United States of America, on whose territory the Archdiocese has its headquarters.

4. The local Ecclesiastical Congress is the authority that forwards to the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church for confirmation of the election, as well as for the elevation of the newly elected one to the rank of bishop, should he not be one.

5. The spiritual authority of the Archbishop derives from that of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, which grants him the investiture through the Patriarchal Gramata in a solemn and public ceremony.

6. The Archbishop, along with the legislative, executive and disciplinary organs of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America, leads the Eparchy independently, having the right and freedom to ordain priests, deans, councilors and clerks, to grant ecclesiastic accolades and ranks, to apply disciplinary sanctions, to have economic and financial self-administration, to publish magazines, newspapers, bulletins, almanacs, cultic and religious education books for the Eparchy, to supervise and direct the entire ecclesiastical and cultural activity of the parishes.

7. The Archbishop is a rightful member of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, with the right to vote on matters concerning his Diocese. The Holy Synod's positions or decisions regarding the relationship between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Romanian State are not obligatory for the Archbishop of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America nor for the priests and faithful under his jurisdiction, all of them living in countries with political and social systems different from that of Romania.

8. The parishes of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America are owners de jure and de facto of the personal and real property they possess, having to administer them in conformity with the Statutes of the Archdiocese as well as

with the laws of the respective states. The Romanian Patriarchate does not claim any rights of personal or real property on the parishes within the jurisdictional territory of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America.

9. The Romanian Orthodox Missionary in America enjoys the right to establish and maintain inter-Orthodox, inter-Christian and ecumenical relationships with the religious organizations on its jurisdictional territory, having to observe the dogmatic teaching and canonical rules of the Holy Eastern Orthodox Church. Its Archbishop is the only Hierarch invested with the authority to represent it canonically and legally.

10. In order to be aided in his leadership activities, the Archbishop may have an Auxiliary Bishop. This one enjoys the right to be honored according to his rank and is, as the Archbishop, a member of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The Auxiliary Bishop to be is recommended by the Archbishop in agreement with the Archdiocesan Council. The procedure for his confirmation and his elevation to the Hierarchical level is the same as for the Archbishop with the exception that he is installed by the Archbishop.

— The Holy Synod recommends that the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America take into account all the above in amending its Statutes.

Bringing to Your Eminence's knowledge all the above for their implementation, we brotherly embrace you in our Lord Jesus Christ.

President of the Holy Synod
† **J U S T I N I A N**
Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church

Secretary of the Holy Synod
† **Bishop ANTONIE Ploieșteanul**
Patriarchal Vicar

¹⁴ Fr. Nicholas Apostola, *Remembering Archbishop Victorin*, Almanac Credința 2002, pp. 105 – 108.

¹⁵ Archim. Mitrof. Dr. Vasile Vasilachi, *In the Presence of Christ*, Credința Almanac (1996), p. 70.
