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CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ROMANIA (Overview)

1.HISTORICAL OVERVIEW (short)

A. Antiquity

Although there have been debates on the evanghelisation in today's Dobrogea (Scythia Minor) by Saint Andrew the Apostle, first historical records of Christian presence in this province date back to the end of the third century. Despite the scarcity of evidence, the Christian missionary activity cannot be denied on the territory of this country starting with the first century of the Christian Age

As for Scythia Minor, the beginnings of Christianity are of Oriental origin, emerging from the regions where Christians came from, namely Greece, Syria, Asia Minor, but also of Western Roman origin, as shown by the contents of the discovered inscriptions, dating back to that period. At the end of 6th century, among Christian names also appear the names of Slavic proto-Bulgarian origin. Most inscriptions (around 45) however come from Tomis, the capital of the province, while all the other (around 36) from other cities. These are written in Greek and Latin on tombstones. Given the continuing relationships between Scythia Minor and the other provinces of the empire, we can assume that Christianity appeared in the first centuries. But the documents lead us, as far as the approximate dating of the process of penetration of Christianity in this region, towards the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth, when, during the persecution of Diocletian and Liciniu, the martyrologies recount various episodes of torture suffered by Christians, especially those of former soldiers.

The archeological discovery at Niculiţel in 1971 enabled us to discover a *martyrion* with the relics of four Christians that had been martyred at a date that is still unknown. Most martyrs were from Tomis, but also from other regions of Scythia Minor: Noviodunum, Dinogetia, Axiopolis, Durostorum.

The form of ecclesiastical organization present in Scythia Minor was the episcopate, with its center in Tomis. The first bishop, who, no doubt led this episcopate, was Saint Bretanion, who had to face Emperor Valens at Tomis between 368-369 due to his belonging to homeism.

After Bretanion, Gerontius was mentioned during the second Council of Comstantinople (381). Teotim (392-407) was more well-known, a writer, ascetic and philosopher, especially for his friendship with John Chrysostom. Timothy was another bishop who took part in the Council of Ephesus (431). A few years later (446), we meet Bishop John, mentioned in the fight for Orthodox faith against Nestorians and Monophysits. In 449, Alexander signed the acts of the Synod of Constantinople. It seems that due to difficult conditions in Scythia Minor, he did not attend the Council of Chalcedon (451). In 458, Teotim III was on the throne of Tomis, who kept an intense correspondence with the Emperor Leon. After a break of 60 years, in the context of theopaschite controversy of the Scythian monks, we meet Bishop Patern signing the acts of the Synod of Constantinople by the title *metropolitanus*. Various *Notitia Episcopatum* use for Scythia Minor the civil lists of Hierocles that brought to us several final lists recording the throne of Tomis as the metropolitan seat. But, the civil lists do not match with the ecclesiastic ones. Archeology and literary sources do not mention any other bishop than the Bishop of Tomis. Therefore, we believe that the importance of Tomis as a metropolitan seat lies only in its civil content.

On the other hand, the high number of discovered basilicas (30), spread over the entire Synthia Minor, and the existence of other sacred buildings required more than one bishop. In favour of this argument comes also the local autonomy of cities and ethnic diversity of Christians, attested by numerous inscriptions. Further studies will bring more light to this issue. The last known bishop of Tomis was Valentinian, who, at the middle of the 6th century, maintained correspondence with the Pope Virgil. Emperor Justinian first strengthened many towns in Scythia Minor, but by the end of the sixth century new barbarian invaders led the province into a deep decline that lasted for centuries until the beginning of the second millennium. In the 19th century, with the Christianization of the Bulgarians, Christians from the northern Danube were included legally, liturgically, and culturally into the sphere of influence of Constantinople, and the schism of 1054 and the period that followed just sanctioned and ratified a long process of Christian and cultural incorporation of ancient Greco-Latin spaces into the Byzantine cultural and religious space. The Romanian people in formation will later speak a language of Latin origin, but culturally and especially religiously will be incorporated into the jurisdiction of Constantinople.

b. The structure of Catholic church at the beginning of the Middle Ages

Dobrogea

With the Christianisation of Bulgarians (870), then Russians (989), and Hungarians (around 1000), the territory of our country came more than before under the attention of these powers, but the influence of Byzantine was predominant. Due to imperial policy and commercial ties with the Byzantine world, Dobrogea maintained its religious ties with Constantinople.

After the great Avaro-Slavic invasion of 602 that ravaged the ancient Christian organisation of Schytia Minor and until the 9th century, when the Bulgarian domination extended to southern Dobrogea, the most important political and religious center in the entire province was in Durostorum (Silistra). A new phase in the ecclesiastical life at Durostorum began in 971, with the reconquering of the Lower Danube. In that year, Emperor John Tzimiskes (969-976), after a three-month siege of the fortress, defeated the Prince of Kiev, Sviatoslav, who had occupied north-eastern Bulgaria and had refused to return to Russia. The Emperor reorganized the Episcopal Center at Durostorum into a metropolitan form, under the permanent jurisdiction of Constantinople. It is very likely that the entire Dobrogea could have gone under that authority.

Despite the Byzantine activity for strengthening the old Scythian limes (strategic defense line), we are witnessing the beginning of a genuine organization of the locals in the struggle against the Byzantines towards the end of the century. The Christian presence in Dobrogea has also been demonstrated by the discovery of churches at Murfatlar-Basarabi, Bisericuta-Gărvan and Niculiţel. There are six chapters in Murfatlar, dated back to: 6500 (year 992) and 6550 (year 042). Some inscriptions in Greek and Slavic provide the names of priests, monks and believers living there, and confirm the monastic character of the Basarabi complex. Dinogetia-Garvan is another church center. Its spiritual and material prosperity has been demonstrated by various archeological discoveries: houses, crosses, coins, a church, a cemetery, seals of different secular and church personalities. The church was built after the great invasion of Pechenegs in 1036. There was discovered a golden cross with a relic belonging to "Michael the Hierarch of Russia".

The hierarch was identified as the Archbishop Michael of Kiev (1130-1145). In terms of spiritual life in the province between 10th and 12th centuries, from the available sources, we could say that it was good despite less favourable conditions, wars and frequent conflicts. For this reason, there are traces of few churches. For the following period (after the 12th century), an important role in the Christian life of the province, as well as in eastern Walachia and southern Moldova, had been played by the Archdiocese of Vicina which became a metropolitan seat 1260.

c.**Transylvania**

From the 9th century, the first pre-statal formations were known under the rule of Gelu, Glad and Menumorut. At Dăbîca, Gelu's capital, there were found the ruins of a church probably from the 9th century, and the foundations of three churches and other religious objects were discovered not far from the nowadays Dăbîca. In the north-west of

Transylvania, there was a statal formation at Menumorut, with its centre at Biharea, which refused to accept the rule of the Hungarian Duke Arpad (907), and invoked the sovereignty of the Byzantine Emperor, then Leon the 4th, in the negotiations with the Duke's messengers. In the new context of the presence of Hungarians in Transylvania, closer attitude of locals towards Constantinople should be understood as an attempt to find a protecting power (distant) against Hungarian domination.

The Hungarians in the Pannonian plane came into contact with Latin Christianity of Bavarians and their dukes. It should be noted that, in some areas, the young Christianity of Hungarians in Transylvania was right from the beginning influenced by the Christianity of oriental roots of Transylvania and southern-Danubian regions.

For example, marriage of priests had been mainatined here up to 1112, as well as other lithurgical practices. Lent started on Monday before Ash Wednesday and it lasted seven weeks. Due to Gregorian reform and closeness to the Latin West, Hungarians abandoned oriental practices, these remaining just for the use of locals. This is especially important as it showsthe ethnic and religious continuity of the locals within the broader faith community of the Ancient Church, in its movement towards the medieval period when schism-generating Byzantine political and reliogious tendencies began to shape. A 10th century church with a semicircular apse, as well as the traces of an older church were discovered in Alba Iulia. Above the latter, a cathedral was built in the 12th century, which was later extended.

The organization of Christianity in Transylvania is due to Saint Stephen (995-1038) and his successors. King Stephen laid the foundations of the Metropolitan Seat with its center at Esztergom (Gran), where he built a cathedral together with the Byzantines. Under his jurisdiction were 10 bishops, two of them being in Transylvania: "Episcopatus Bihariensis" (Oradea) and "Episcopatus Transilvaniensis" (Alba Iulia), and one in Banat, in the capitals of Athum, Morisena (Cenad).

Episcopatus Bihariensis (Oradea). It was found in the northern regions of Menumorut, probably in 1010. Stephen failed to complete the organisation of this Archdiocese. His work was continued by Ladislau (1041-1095). In 1083, he continued the expansionist activity towards the east, and built a Benedictine Abbey at Sîniob in 1088 in order to keep here a very important relic: the right hand of king Stephen brought from Alba Regalis (Székesfehérvár). Ladislau reached up to the curvature of Carpathians, the region of Mureş and Tirnave rivers. Against this territorial extension reacted his neighbours, especially the Cumans, but when the king was busy with a military campaign in Croatia in 1091, they invaded the territories and destroyed the Biharea and Tăşnad fortresses. Upon his return, Ladislau built a castle in Oradea and a cathedral, and founded

here an episcopal center at Biharea, turned into a chapter with a lot of land. The Oradea Archdiocese (Magnum Varadium) included Oradea, Cluj, Satu Mare, Sălaj, Debrecen (Hungary), and it spread more to the north compared to today's Romanian border. Christian life had been in continuous development therefore 100 later there were many parishes and monasteries of premonstratensians, Augustinians, Ioannians, etc. After 1192, namely, after the canonization of King Ladislau I, the cathedral church in Oradea was enlarged, and the relics of the saint, along with other objects, were placed in the main altar, and the church became an important place of pilgrimage. This thriving state was severely affected by the invasion of the Tartars in 1241, being slowly restored over a long period of time. We know the succession of bishops starting with 1103.

Episcopatus Transylvaniensis (Alba Iulia). It was founded at the same time as Oradea episcopate, and at the beginning it had its center in the castle of Tăşnad. After the Cuman invasion of 1091, the center moved to Alba Iulia and was endowed with land and a chapter. Under its jurisdiction were the regions in the center of Transylvania, the Ugocea region (Ukraine) and the Tashnad region. The Alba Iulia chapter also had a school where the future clergy were educated. In Cluj-Mănăştur, a Benedictine abbey with a rich spiritual activity was probably founded in 1062.

King Coloman (1095-1116), giving up the title of his predecessors as "rex Ungarorum" adopted the the title of " rex Ungariae ", and introduced Latin as an official language in the administration and church liturgy. He established the celibacy of priests, and in relations with Romanians, he decided that if any of their territories were entrusted or given to Catholic churches and monasteries, they should remain in the possession of the latter. As in case of bishops of Oradea, none of first bishops is known.

The duchy of Athum existed in the *Banat* region; baptized in Vidin in 1002, he built a monastery inside his castle at Morisena. As Menumorut, he also did not stand the Hungarian expansion. In a fight with King Stephen, he was betrayed by his adviser Cenad, who fled over to Hungarians. He was baptised and then was sent by the king with an army against Athum, and defeated near Maidan. Its territory then passed under the sovereignty of Hungarians.

Episcopatus Morisena (Cenad). It was founded by Stephen in the capital of Athum, Morisena. The first bishop was a Benedictine Venetian monk, Saint Gerardo Sagredo. Arriving here with twelve monks, he found there no church or seat suitable for an episcopate. There was only one monastery occupied by the Greek monks of Saint John the Baptist. Under the pressure of the newly arrived, they left the place heading for Oroszlános. Later, Saint Gerardo built here a cathedral church in honor of Saint George, an abbey and another church dedicated to the Holy Virgin, where he wanted to be buried.

From his work, we discover a Latin school where 30 pupils studied. It is the oldest known school in our country.

Gerardo died as a martyr near Budapest on the 24th September 1046 in a revolt of pagan Hungarians against the Christians. For a while, his body was in the church of Morisena; now found in San Donato church in Venice. The borders of the episcopate were between the Criş river in the north, and the Vidin fortress in the south. It bordered in the south with Wallachia and in the west with former Yugoslavia and Hungary. We lack any information until the Tatar invasion of 1241; we can assume it had a normal course of development as at that time sources describe a flourishing situation destroyed by invaders. Later, the episcopate was never called Morisena but "Tsanadiensis". Here, the succession of bishops is known since its beginning.

From this period, we know about the ruins of some monasteries and churches (Oroszlános, Hodoş, Meseşeni, etc.) that maintain in their buildings some architectural elements that are still present in the remaining style, as well as other elemnts typical for Kiev and Poskov (Ukraine), and Tihany and Zebegeny (Hungary).

These churches and monasteries must be linked to the letter of King Henry of Hungary (1196-1204) informing Pope Innocent III that some churches of "Greek" monks in his kingdom (Bihor) were going into ruin due to "lack of interest of diocesan bishops, and even of Greeks themselves". Against some former or current affirmations of controversial authors, it is worth noting that until 1200, the documents of the time do not mention 72 Transylvanian localities, which implicitly tells us that on the arrival of the Hungarians there was a native population.

d. **Wallachia**

For centuries, Christians in Wallachia had only priests and bishops (in Greek: chorepiscopoi) sent from Constantinople, Justiniana Prima (6th century), and from the south-Danubian centers, or Dobrogea (4th-6th centuries). It is not known whether they were descendants of the Dacian-Roman or Greek-Latin population. The Roman Apostolic seat calls them "false bishops" in opposition to the bishops arriving to Transylvania after the christianization of Hungarians. For the 10th-12th centuries, we have no other information about the organization and life of the church in Wallachia.

e. **Moldova**.

After the Slavonization of the 8th-9th centuries, Christians from Moldova were compelled to obey to the Patriarchate of Ohrid, Latin missionaries being forced to return to Italy, the Greek-Slavic rite strengthening its positions to the detriment of the Latin rite.

After the 1054 schism, in which the Patriarch Leon of Ohrid played an important role, the Christians in Moldova preserved the Slavonic rite and language, being subject directly to the patriarchate mentioned above.

Ethnically, here we witness the beginning of the crystallization of a native population distinct from the Pecheneg, Cuman and Tartar tribes that refused both their domination, and that of Magyars and Saxons, who crossed over to the Carpathians. Moldova being in the area of influence of Byzantium, Russia and Hungary, each of these powers tried to control and dominate this territory. But both the local population and the Turanic tribes opposed it, whether successfully or not.

Due to small number of inhabitants and weak economic advantages, both Russia and Byzantium were satisfied with some advantages derived from the political-religious influence and trade using Moldovan routes, especially on the rivers Siret and Prut, trade that often was disrupted by the Pechenegs and Cumans. For military and religious reasons, since the 13th century, Hungary occupied some areas of arrival to Moldova (the Vrancea region and the Oituz Valley). Passing through the Bran pass, the Hungarians built different defense fortresses against eastern invaders. In this context, the **Episcopaate of Cumans** (1227-1241) was born. Due to frequent incursions of Tatar tribes, contacts with Byzantium were rather weak. This is the reason why Moldova now has special relations with the religious center in Halicz. But in the general context of Moldavian history, Byzantine influence is predominant.

Before the foundation of the feudal state of Moldova, under the influence of the Hungarian crown, the Milcov Episcopate was founded in 1227, although it had a short up to 1241 when it was destroyed by the Mongols led by Gingis Han.

Under the influence of the Polish Catholic Church and the Papacy, at the beginnings of the state of Moldova, the **Episcopates of Siret** (1371-1434) and **Baia** (1413-1523) were founded in the north of this country. Under the influence of the Polish Catholic Crown, **Episcopate of Bacău** was founded in in 1607, which, except for the first one, had Polish bishops until the beginning of the nineteenth century. The missionaries who led Catholic communities in Moldova, diverse ethnically and linguistically, were Conventual Franciscan, Dominican and Jesuit monks from Italy, Poland or Hungary. There were also few indigenous priests. From 1818 until 1884, Moldovan Catholicism was organized as an Apostolic Vicarage, and since that time there has existed the Roman-Catholic Episcopate of Iasi.

In **Transylvania**, Catholicism in the 16th century had been in decline after Hungary's defeat in the war against the Ottoman Empire (Mohacs - 1526), and especially due to religious Reformation that led to transfer to Calvinism of a large part of the Hungarian population, and to Lutheranism of Saxons. Following the expulsion of the

Turks from Hungary and the occupation of Transylvania by the Habsburg Empire (1699), Catholicism took a new impetus, favored by the Imperial Catholic Court of Vienna. After the unification of Transylvania with Romania and the formation of the Romanian National Unitary State (1et of December 1918), the number of Roman Catholics has increased considerably, and the Roman Catholic Church has intensified its activity. New monastic orders and congregations have appeared (Assumption Monks, Assumption Oblates Sisters, the Congregation of Sisters of St. Mary, etc.).

2. **MODERN CHURCH**

Based on the Concordat of 1927-1929, the 1932 agreement was signed between Romania and the Papal State stipulating that the property in Transylvania that had been administered only by the "Roman Catholic Status" was transfered into the ownership of the church.

After the establishment of totalitarianism, measures were taken in our country against the Roman Catholic Church. According to the 1948 Covenant Law, by a Decree of September 1948, and the decision of May 1950, only two dioceses were approved: one in Alba Iulia for Transylvania, and another one in Bucharest for Moldova, Muntenia and Dobrogea. That, as well as other permanent complaints of the clergy and Roman Catholic believers, led to the fact that since 1948 Roman Catholic Church has had no organization and functioning status, as provided by the Law of Cults.

We should underline that the episcopates were considered "abolished" by the Romanian authorities (Iasi, Timisoara, Satu Mare and Oradea) but in reality they have continued their existence. The Vatican did not recognize their abolishment and appointed a bishop's deputy ("ordinarily substituted "), who, although not recognized formally by the Romanian state as heads of episcopates, in practice, were treated as having this rank.

The regulations in Romania after the World War II have also substantially altered the situation of monastic orders and congregations. According to the new law on education and etatization of health and social care institutions, some orders and congregations (which were mainly concerned with education or charity) were practically abolished. We should note that the Roman Catholic Church in 1948 had in Romania 25 orders and congregations, 79 monasteries with 451 monks and 124 monasteries with 1649 sisters. These orders and congregations had 421 schools, numerous hospitals, elderly homes, orphanages and other charities. The H.C.M. no. 810/1949 ordered the end of activity of 15 out of 25 monastic orders and congregation. The 10 orders that were not abolished by law (such as the Franciscan Order) greatly limited their activity, especially in parishes. After the fall of communist regime in 1989, the situation of Roman-Catholic Church has improved. Episcopates of Iasi, Timisoara, Satu Mare and Oradea have again

been recognized by the Romanian state. Also, monastic orders and congregations renewed their activity after the abrogation of H.C.M. 810/1950.

According to Census of 1992, the Roman-Catholic Church of Romania had 1.144.820 believers, 646 parishes, aproximately 1.000 churches and chapels, and around 800 priests.



A. Roman-Catholic Church

In terms of its organization, the Roman-Catholic Church in our country includes 10 dioceses.



St. Joseph of Bucharest

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Bucharest includes: Muntenia, Oltenia and Dobrogea, with around 40.000 believers, mostly Romanian. The Archdiocese was founded by Pope Leon XIII on 27th of April 1883, who, by his apostolic letter *Praecipuum munus* raised the Apostolic Vicarage of Wallachia to the rank of Archdiocese by appointing the bishop Ignatius Paoli, who, in 1870, was the Bishop of Nicopole and Apostolic Administrator of Wallachia. The Archdiocese is also a Archbishop for the other dioceses, being divided into 6 decanates: North Bucharest and South Bucharest, Ploieşti, Craiova, Constanţa and Brăila, with 66 parishes and 114

diocesan priests. On the territory of the diocese, there are also two monasteries (clauses): St. Agnes (Bucharest) and Timişul de Jos (Braşov County). There are also 47 orders and congregations, out of which, we should mention the orders and congregations, among which: Assumption Oblates Sisters, Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Assisi, Missionaries of Charity, (oredr founded by Mother Teresa, 20 kindergartens, 3 primary and secondary schools, 1 high-school, 2 post-secondary schools, 5 superior institutes, 20 units of social assistance. Archdiocese has three publications: *Actualitatea creştină, Pro memoria* and *Verbum.*



St. Michael Cathedral in Alba Iulia

Roman-Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia. Since its founding (1009) until 1932 it had been called the Diocese of Transylvania, and since 1991 it has been raised by the Vatican to the rank of archdiocese. It includes Transylvania itself (without Maramures and Crişana), and it has about 480,000 believers, mostly Hungarians. The Archdiocese functions in 15 decanates: Alba Iulia, Bistrita, Hunedoara, Sibiu Fagaras, Dumbraveni, Braşov, Târgu Secuiesc, Cluj-Dăbâca, Arieş-Turda, Tarnava, Târgu Mureş, Ciuc Superior, Ciuc Superior, Gheorghieni, Odorhei with 265 parishes and 325 priests. There are also 16 monasteries, some of which are parishes, 304 churches, 45 chapels, 9 congregations, 7 child protection centers, 2 children's homes, 15 affiliates of "Caritas" 12 health care centers, elderly care homes, kindergartens, 4 study houses, a theology faculty at "Babeş-Bolyai" University of Cluj Napoca, a theological institute in Alba Iulia, a post-secondary school, 4 theological lyceums. The Archdiocese has 5 diocese publications, Vasárnap, Keresztény Szó, Krisztus Világossága, Theologica Transylvensia, Studia Universitatis, 17 parish publications, youth magazines, radio and TV programs, etc.



The ”Assumption of the Virgin Mary” Iași

Roman-Catholic Diocese of Iaşi is active in Moldova. There are 243,708 believers, mainly Romanians. The territory of the diocese is divided into 10 decanates of Iaşi, Valea Siretului, Bukovina, Roman, Moineşti, Bacău, Traian, Trotuş, Piatra and Vrancea, and includes 126 parishes and 227 cult places serving 222 diocesan priests. 50

congregations with 92 houses. There are 50 religious monastic orders and congregations with 152 monks and 467 sisters on the territory of the diocese. Among the congregations, we should mention: Minori Capucini Brothers, Augustinian Assumption Brothers, Missionary Assumption Mission Sisters, Brotherhoods of Christian Schools, and St. Joseph Franciscan Brotherhood Province of Romania, Missionaries of Charity. There are also 36 social and medical assistance centers (a hospital, 10 orphanages, 10 dispensaries, etc.), a theology faculty at the "Al.I.Cuza" University of Iasi, 4 theological lyceums, 3 seminars tof heology, 2 theological institutes (Iaşi and Roman), a theological academy, a vocational school, a school of church singers, 1 college, 14 kindergartens, 1 oratorio-student hostel, 2 spiritual centers, a retreat house, 2 research and religious studies centres.



”St. Gheorghe” Cathedral in Timișoara

Roman-Catolic Diocese of Timişoara, founded in 1030 with the original title of Cenad, it received the initial name Cenad in 1930 and includes the counties of Timis, Caras Severin, Arad and part of Mehedinti. Believers, about 160,000, are Hungarians, German, Romanian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Slovak, Czech, and others. The diocese has 73 parishes, grouped in eight decanates: Timisoara, Cenad, Deta, Arad, Vinga, Pankota, Caraş and Severin, which in turn form three archdeans: Timiş, Mureş, Banat Montan. On the territory of the diocese, there are 14 religious orders and congregations, including the Order of the Minor Conventual Brothers, the Society of the Divine Savior, the Sisters of Notre Dame, the Benedictine Sisters, the Franciscan Sisters.

The diocese has 95 priests; 79 consecrated people live in 12 monasteries recently taken over or built. Social assistance is organized through 8 Caritas centers. There are also a seminar high school in Timisoara and a kindergarten for children in Timisoara. Periodical publications: " *Vita Catholica Banatus* " (monthly) and "*Laudetur*" (montly- a sheet for youth).



Cathedral in Oradea

Roman-Catholic Diocese in Oradea, with activity in Bihor and Sălaj counties. The number of believers, most of them Hungarian, is about 62,000. The Diocese has 57 parishes, grouped in two decanates: Oradea and Crasna. The diocese has a theological high-school in Oradea. Among the monastic organizations, we should mention the Premonstratens, Misericordian, Franciscan Capucin and Ursuline orders.

Satu Mare Cathedral

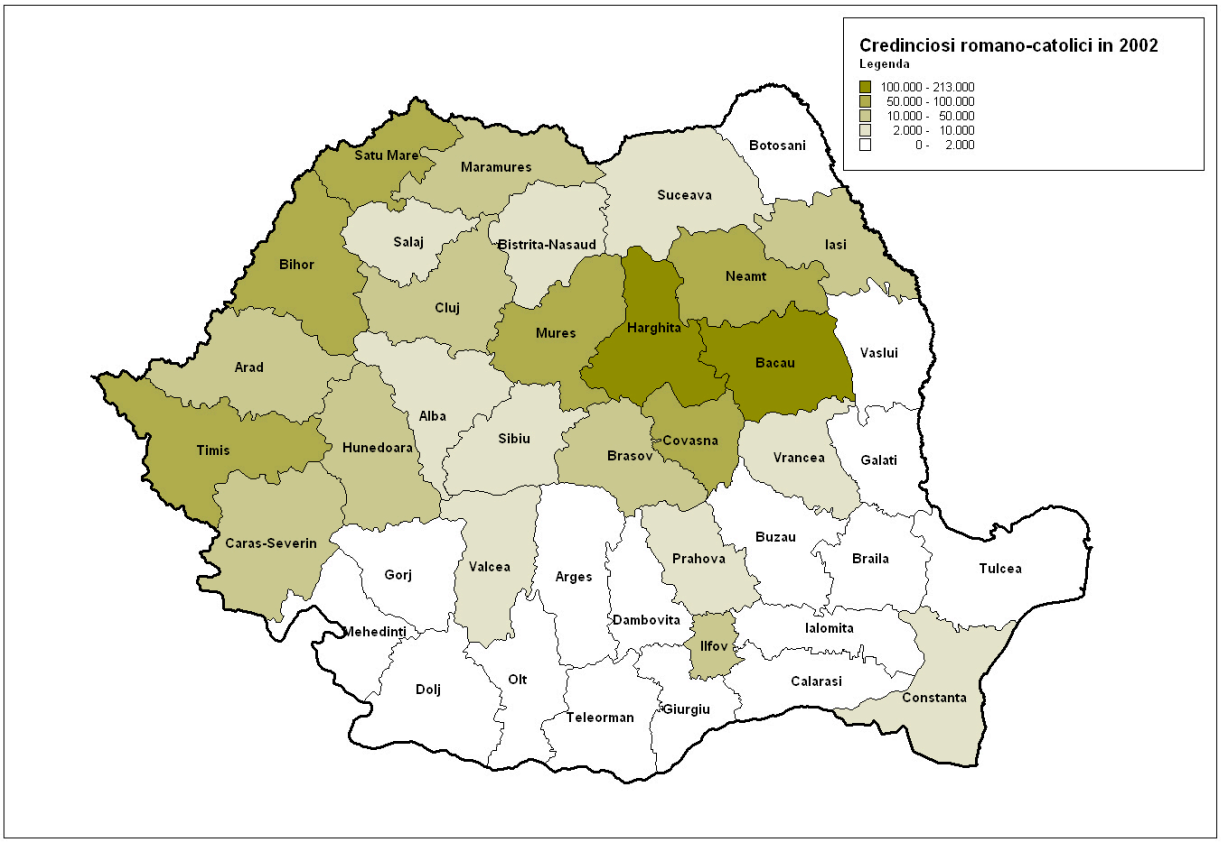
Roman-Catholic Diocese of Satu Mare, with the seat in Satu Mare includes Satu Mare and Maramureş. The Diocese was founded in 1804. The number of believers, most

Hungarians, and Germans, is 100,000. The Diocese has 60 parishes and 59 branches, grouped in seven decanates: Satu Mare, Ugocea, Ardud, Carei I, Carei II, Baia Mare and Sighetu Marmatiei. There are 121 churches and 62 priests. Among the congregations, we should mention: The Sisters of Charity St. Vincent de Paul (33 sisters), Jesus Christ's Society, Hiltrup Missionary Sisters, Ursuline Sisters and Small Daughters of the Heart of Jesus. The diocese has two theological schools in Satu Mare and Carei, and one central social care unit "Caritas" in Satu Mare, and 47 territorial units.

The Roman Catholic Church has a rich charity activity. By means of "Caritas", other associations, or directly through parishes and religious organizations, the Church has set up kindergartens for children, orphanages, elderly homes, canteens, medical centers and practices.

The Church publishes several publications. Thus, the monthly Magazine "The Christian News" appears in Bucharest, "Keresztény Szó" (monthly magazine) and "Vasárnap" in Cluj, "the light of the Christian" and "Jesus, the child's friend" in Iaşi.

The representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in our country have close ties with Roman Catholic churches abroad and participate in theological meetings organized by the Vatican and local Catholic churches. At the same time, they take part in the theological meetings initiated by the Ecumenical Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches, in joint commissions with the main Christian churches in the world. In this regard, we should note the long-held dialogue with Orthodox churches, a formal dialogue that began in 1980 on the island of Patmos. The following meetings were held in Munich (1982), on the island of Crete and Bari (1984), Vienna and Freising (1990), and Balamand (1993). It is worth noting that the dialogue started under good auspices beacme difficult after the fall of communism by the issue of Catholic Church of Oriental Rite.


Credinciosi romano-catolici in 2002
Legenda
100.000 - 213.000
50.000 - 100.000
10.000 - 50.000
2.000 - 10.000
0 - 2.000
Botosani
Satu Mare
Maramures
Suceava
Salaj
Bistrita-Nasaud
Iasi
Bihor
Neamt
Cluj
Mures
Harghita
Bacau
Vaslui
Arad
Alba
Sibiu
Covasna
Brasov
Vrancea
Galati
Timis
Hunedoara
Caras-Severin
Gorj
Valcea
Arges
Prahova
Buzau
Braila
Tulcea
Mehedinti
Dambovita
Ilfov
Ialomita
Dolj
Olt
Teleorman
Giurgiu
Calarasi
Constanta


Eparhia de Maramureş
Eparhia de Oradea Mare
Eparhia de Cluj-Gherla
Arhieparhia de Alba Iulia şi Făgăraşi
Eparhia de Lugoj
Eparhia de Bucureşti

b. The Romanian Church United with Rome, Greek-Catholic

This church was born in Transylvania at the end of the 17th century by the unification of a a part of Orthodox Romanians with the Catholic Church.

Unde the decline of Ottoman power and expansion of the Habsburg Empire, which at the end of the 17th century annexed Transylvania, Protestantism, dominant during the Transylvanian Principality under Ottoman suzerainty, was losing its influence, and Catholicism, the religion of Habsburg Empire, was on the rise. The leopoldine diploma issued by Emperor Leopold I in 1691 recognized the rights of the four accepted religions (Catholic, Lutheran, Calvin and Unitarian), as well as the privileges of the three nations (Hungarians, Saxons and Székely). In 1692, the emperor confirmed to the Orthodox priests, who accepted the union with Rome, the same rights enjoyed by the Roman Catholic clergy, and by its diploma in 1698, gave to Romanians the opportunity to move to any of the four accepted religions.

Due to difficult economic situation of Romanians, most of them in a state of serfdom, lack of political and religious rights (the Orthodox Church had the status of a tolerated religion), these promises proved fruitful. The Synod of Alba Iulia, convened in 1697 by Orthodox Archbishop Atanasie Anghel, accepted the four compulsory principles of union with Rome: recognition of papal supremacy, existence of purgatory, sharing of unleavened bread and the Filioque. By accepting these conditions, the united Romanians were guaranteed the preservation of traditional rites, observance of Orthodox feasts, election of bishops by the Synod (subsequently recognized by the Pope and the Emperor), equality of rights of clergy and believers united with the clergy and believers of the Catholic Church. These rights were confirmed in two emperor's diplomas (1699-1701) but unfortunately they were only respected to a small extent.

Between the united believers and the Orthodox Church appeared misunderstandings. The Archbishop Atanasie Anghel, who, after making the union, was confirmed by the Catholic Church only as a bishop, and was excommunicated by the Bishop of Walachia. With all the pressures and constraints, many Transylvanian Romanians refused the union, there were even riots against it, such as the one led by the monk Sophronius of Cioara in 1759. To settle these conflicts and suppress the revolts, Austrian general Bukow was sent to Transylvania in 1761. The general, in excess of zeal, destroyed many Orthodox churches and monasteries.

The first diocese of united Romanians had been located until 1721 in Alba Iulia, then moved to Fagaras for a short time, and from 1737 settled permanently in Blaj. Gradually, other united dioceses were created: in 1777 the Diocese of Oradea was established, and the dioceses of Gherla (in 1930 moved to Cluj) and Lugoj in 1853, and the Blaj Diocese was raised to the rank of Archdiocese and Metropolitan Church of Alba Iulia and Fagaras. After the conclusion of the Concordate between the Romanian State and the Vatican in 1930, the Maramureş Diocese was founded in Baia Mare.

In order to strengthen the union with Rome, the united bishops used for a long time

the monastic orders and congregations. Greek Catholic orders were set up, among which a significant role throughout the history of this church was played by the ***Order of Saint Basil the Great***, a monastic order which governs the norms prescribed by the Father of the Church.

As a result of the union, many Greek Catholic youths had the opportunity to study in Rome and in other Western Catholic universities. Upon return, they had an important contribution in the development of Romanian culture, formation of the national conscience of the Romanians and in their struggle for the preservation of the national spirit.

Among the outstanding personalities of this Church, we should mention the bishops Ioan Inochentie Micu Klein, Gheorghe Şincai, Petru Maior, Samuel Micu, Timotei Cipariu, Simion Bărnuţiu, Alexandru Papiu Ilarian.

A positive consequence of the union was the development of the theological, as well as general education. In 1734, a Greek Catholic Theological Seminary in Blaj was founded and then transformed into a theological institute in 1853. The Greek-Catholic important schools were created in Oradea, Gherla, Cluj and Lugoj.

Over the years, during the important moments in the history of Romanians in Transylvania (the Revolution of 1848, the fight of the memorandists), the leaders of the two Romanian churches worked fruitfully together to promote the interests of Romanians and to defend the Romanian national spirit. On the 1st of December 1918, the act of the Union of Transylvania with the motherland was read by the Greek Catholic Bishop Iuliu Hossu, a future cardinal assisted by the Orthodox Bishop of Caransebes, Miron Cristea, the future patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, who embraced the crowd gathered in Alba Iulia and declared a brotherly understanding.

After the unification of Transylvania with Romania, the United Romanian Church with Rome became one of the most important cults in the country. In fact, according to the 1930 census, Greek Catholic believers represented 7.9% of the country's population. For this reason, due to the role played in history by this church, the Romanian Constitution of 1923 stipulated that "the Romanian Orthodox Church is the dominant church, and the Greek Catholic takes precedence over other cults," both of which were declared national churches. The legal status of the Greek Catholic Church and its relations with the Romanian state were better defined by the Concordat between the Vatican and Romania (1927-1929). The document provided for the existence in Romania of three Catholic rites: Greek, Latin and Armenian. For the Greek rite, the following organizational structure was stipulated: a Metropolitan Church in Blaj, with four suffragan dioceses: Oradea, Lugoj, Cluj Gherla and Maramures.

In its work, the Greek Catholic Church was supported by laic associations. In 1928, the General Association of the United Romanians (AGRU) was founded. The Greek Catholic students founded the Association of Transylvanian Romanian Students Union (ASTRU), and women founded the United Romanian Women Association (AFRU).

After the establishment of communist dictatorship in 1948, the United Romanian Church with Rome was outlawed. At that time, it had about 1.8 million believers, about

2,500 churches with 1,700 priests, a theological academy, three theological seminaries, monasteries and denominational schools.

According to Decree no. 358 of 1 December 1948, its property was taken over by the state, and churches and parochial houses were assigned to the Romanian Orthodox Church.

The Communist authorities arrested and condemned all the bishops and priests who opposed the abolition of the Romanian Church United with Rome. Despite this, the Greek Catholic Church continued its activity due to secretly ordained bishops (instead of those arrested) and the priests remaining in resistance. This activity included liturgy in private homes, funerals after the Greek Catholic rite, ordination of new priests, baptisms, catechesis, pastoralism.

After the events of December 1989, one of the first measures adopted by the Council of the National Salvation Front was Decree Law no. 9 of 31 December 1989, which abrogated the Decree no. 358/1948 and officially recognized the United Romanian Church with Rome, the Greek Catholic Church.

On March 14, 1990, the Holy Seat appointed the leaders of the five Greek Catholic dioceses, the head of which was the Archbishop Alexander Todea, who, in the same year, was raised to the rank of Cardinal. The hierarchs were recognized by presidential decree of the Romanian State. In 2005, the Vatican raised the Greek Catholic Church in Romania to the rank of Major Archdiocese.

In order to regulate the status of the former property of the Romanian Church United with Rome, the Decree-Law No.126 of April 24, 1990 was adopted, which stipulates that "*the property taken over by the state through the effect of Decree no. 358/1948, currently in the patrimony of the state, with the exception of the estates, shall be returned, in its present state, to the Romanian Church United with Rome* ".

In this normative act it is stipulated that where the number of places of worship is insufficient, related to the number of believers, the State will support the construction of new places of worship by making available the land and funds.

Regarding the property taken over by the Romanian Orthodox Church, art. 3 of the Decree Law no.126 / 1990 stipulates: "*The legal situation of the places of worship, parish houses belonging to the Romanian Church United with Rome, Greek Catholic and taken over by the Romanian Orthodox Church will be established by a mixed commission, made up of clerical representatives of the two religious cults, taking into account the desire of believers in the communities that hold this property*."

Based on art. 2 of this Decree Law, following the activity of the Joint Commission, made up of representatives of the Government and of the Romanian Church United with Rome, 80 buildings and built-up land were transferred from state to church property by Government Decision no. 466/1992.

In the six dioceses, the population census conducted in 2011 recorded the existence of 150,593 Greek Catholic believers. The vast majority of believers are Romanian, but there are also Hungarian and Ukrainian-speaking believers, for the latter there is a Ruthenian vicariate that is included into the United Romanian Diocese of Maramureş.

The church includes 6 dioceses, 3 vicariates, 75 decanates (many understaffed), 763 parishes and 761 priests. The main difficulty faced by the church after its return to legality is lack of places of worship. On December 31, 2015, the total number of places of worship was 413, the number of places of worship under construction was 79. The parishes that do not have a place of worship officiate divine services in improvised spaces (schools, cultural clubs, etc.)

The education of priests is provided by the Faculty of Greek-Catholic Theology in Cluj-Napoca, divided in three departments: Blaj, Cluj, Oradea, and by the Faculty of Greek-Catholic Theology in Baia Mare. The church also has 8 theological high schools, which are part of the state system of education network.

Gradually, the monastic life of the church was restored. Nowadays, there are over 25 religious monasteries and congregations, of which, the most important are: the Order of St. Basil the Great, the Society of Jesus, the Order of the Assumption Monks, the Order of the Minor Conventual Franciscans, the Congregation of the Assumption Sisters, the Congregation of the Immaculate Hearts.

The Romanian United Church with Rome publishes several publications, among which, we should mention the magazines: "Christian Life", "Uniron", "Messenger", "Awakening of Faith", "Revival. The Sheet of Diocese of Lugoj "(Lugoj), "The Way of Perfection", "Flowers of the Lily ", etc.

The representatives of the United Romanian Church with Rome take part in international theological meetings, have close ties with Greek Catholic and Roman Catholic churches abroad.

With the approval of the Church, there exist several religious associations, including the *General Association of United Romanians*, based in Cluj Napoca (AGRU), an association with branches in the cities of Transylvania and Banat, as well as in Bucharest, the *Association of the Romanian United Youth* (ASTRU), *Romanian Christian Scouts*, *Ion Căianu Cultural Association*, *Marian Reunion*.

Greek Catholic dioceses are committed to helping the poor, the disabled, the sick, and working in other areas of social assistance, the activity carried out by specific actions through "Caritas" associations and some religious orders.

Most important information on the Greek-Catholic dioceses:

The Romanian Church United with Rome Greek-Catholic Diocese of Alba Iulia and Fagaras,
based in Blaj. It has jurisdiction in the counties of Alba (partially), Brasov, Cluj (partially), Covasna, Harghita, Mures, Sibiu and in the counties of the old kingdom. It consists of two vicariates (Bucharest and Făgăraş), 22 decanates, 187 parishes and 222 priests la Blaj.

The Romanian Church United with Rome Greek-Catholic Diocese of Oradea, based in Oradea. It has jurisdiction in the counties of Arad (partially), Bihor, Satu Mare (partially) and Sălaj (partially). It comprises 11 decanates, 140 parishes, 150 priests, 44 religious churches, 8 monasteries, 28 monks, 4 social assistance units. The Diocese has in Oradea a department of theology at the Faculty of Greek-Catholic Theology within Babeş-Bolyai University and a theological high school.

The Romanian Church United with Rome Greek-Catholic Diocese of Cluj-Gherla, based in Cluj-Napoca. It has jurisdiction in the counties of Alba (partially), Bistriţa-Năsăud, Cluj (partially), Maramureş (partially) and Sălaj (partially). It includes a vicariate at Gherla, eleven decanates, 162 parishes, and 176 priests.

The Romanian Church United with Rome Greek-Catholic Diocese of Lugoj, based in Lugoj. It has jurisdiction in the counties of Alba (partially), Arad (partially), Caraş-Severin, Hunedoara and Timiş. It comprises 2 vicariates (in Timisoara and Haţeg), 10 decanates, 283 parishes, 107 priests, 6 monasteries, 15 monks and sisters, 2 social assistance units.

The Romanian Church United with Rome Greek-Catholic Diocese of Maramureş, based in Baia Mare. It has jurisdiction in the counties of Maramureş, Satu Mare (partially), Sălaj (partially) and Suceava. It comprises one cicariate in Suceava (for Ukranians) and one in Rădăuţi, 14 decanates, 152 parishes, and 132 priests.

„Saint Basil the Great" Romanian Church United with Rome Greek-Catholic Diocese of Bucharest was founded in 2014 and is based in Bucharest.
The canonical territory of the new Greek-Catholic Diocese includes the capital of Romania and the counties of the historical province of Wallachia (Oltenia, Muntenia and Dobrogea). There are 15 parishes.

The information for this presentation of the Catholic Church of Romania were taken from official web sites: State Secretariat for Cults; http://www.bisericacatolica.ro/ and official web sites of Romano-Catholic and Greek-Catholic episcopates.

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