

THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ASPECTS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE IN ROMANIA

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The present essay offers a survey of the more important activities of the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) in recent years, both on the national and the international level. The essay is a follow-up of the one that was published in 2001.¹ Since the period we are to deal with is rather long for a purely factual chronicle, we have decided instead to arrange the material thematically.²

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¹ Nicu Dumitrașcu, 'Multiconfessional Romania at the End of the Second Millennium and the Beginning of the Third,' *JECS*, 53 (2001), 3-4, pp. 270-281.

² We have used information collected from various sources, but have referred to them only selectively in order not to overload the text. The main sources have been the journals *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* - Bucharest, *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei* - Bucharest, *Candela Moldovei* - Iași and *Renașterea* - Cluj-Napoca, whose online version was given preference, whenever possible, for the sake of accessibility.

Other important information has been obtained from the websites of the Romanian Patriarchate, www.patriarhia.ro and of the Trinitas Radio Station, the Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Bukovina, Iași, <http://www.mmb.ro/ro/index.php?pagina=51>.

Some statistical information pertaining to early 2006 (in Romanian) can be found on <http://www.patriarhia.ro/BOR/cifrebor.php>. The Romanian Orthodox Church is autocephalous since 1885 and is organized as a Patriarchate since 1925, bearing the name of The Romanian Patriarchate. Its highest authority for all dogmatic, canonical, and religious issues is the Holy Synod, the members of which are the hierarchs in function (metropolitans, archbishops, bishops, assistant bishops). The representative central body of the ROC for all administrative and economical issues, as well as for those that are not judged by the Holy Synod, is the Church National Assembly, which consists of the Holy Synod members and three representatives of each bishopric or archbishopric (one clergy and two lay persons), appointed by the respective diocesan assemblies for a period of four years. The supreme administrative body, both of the Holy Synod and of the Church National Assembly, is the Church National Council. It consists of the administrative counsellors (who are permanent members) and three clergy and six lay persons, elected by the Church National Assembly for a period of four years. His Beatitude the Patriarch is the President of these bodies.

The Romanian Patriarchate has six metropolitan sees in the country with 10 archbishoprics and 16 bishoprics, 161 deaneries, 11102 parishes and 2297 branches, with 13925 priests and deacons and 14870 places of worship. In addition there are three Metropolitan Sees under

A. ROC's National Activities

1. Administrative Reforms

The Holy Synod and the Church National Assembly have been called into session on many occasions during the period, dealing normally with pressing matters and more generally with the welfare of the Church. Many of the decisions taken at these meetings have shown a growing concern with the social activities of the church and with maintaining and developing relations with civil institutions and other churches or religious organizations.

With regard to the administrative structure of ROC, it is worth mentioning two events of 2005. First, in Bucharest on 5-6 March 2005, ROC solemnly commemorated the 120th anniversary of its autocephaly and the 80th anniversary of its elevation to a patriarchate. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I and representatives of other Orthodox Churches were most honourable guests at the event. A session of commemoration was scheduled on the 5th at the patriarchal palace followed on the 6th by a liturgical celebration, which took place in the presence of Mr Traian Băsescu, the president of Romania, and other notables of the executive political body. The event has been commented upon in the media in various ways: most referred to the grandeur that the Church still embodies and is able to display in the Romanian state and society, while a few voices raised doubts about the relevancy of reinforcing an obsolete, out-of-touch concept such as "autocephaly" seems to be in the framework of the contemporary worldview.

More recently, the need to elect a new metropolitan of Transylvania to replace the late metropolitan Antonie Plămădeală, who died on the 29th of August, has required a few extraordinary meetings of the Holy Synod. On 20-21 October the names of the two candidates were announced: Archbishop Andrei Andreicuț of Alba Iulia and Bishop Laurențiu Streza of Caransebeș. On 3-4 November, Laurențiu Streza was elected and confirmed the new metropolitan. However, another decision took public opinion rather by surprise, as there was decided 'the reorganization of the Metropolitanate of Transylvania, due to pastoral-missionary reasons, into the Metropolitanate of Sibiu and Covasna-Harghita, with the metropolitan see in the city of Sibiu, and the Metropolitanate of Cluj, Alba-Iulia, Crișana and Maramureș, with the metropolitan see in the city of Cluj-Napoca'.³ This decision has brought up a major debate in the mass media⁴ and

the jurisdiction of the Romanian Patriarchate (Metropolitan See of Bessarabia, the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan See for Central and Northern Europe, and the Romanian Orthodox Metropolitan See for Western and Southern Europe), one Archbishopric (Romanian Orthodox Archbishopric in America and Canada) and two Bishoprics (Romanian Orthodox Bishopric in Hungary, in Gyula, and the Romanian Orthodox Bishopric in Yugoslavia, with its seat in Vârșeț).

³ Source: Press Office of the Romanian Patriarchate, in *Renașterea* of November 25, 2005, <http://www.arhiepiscopia-ort-cluj.org/revista/?p=3>

⁴ Practically all the daily newspapers dealt with the matter for days, starting with November 4th.

amongst the faithful in Transylvania. Many thought they could see in this reorganization a division of the (spiritual) unity of Transylvania, and indeed a betrayal of the work of the ancestors who fought hard to achieve it. It should be added here that the fire may have been fuelled also by some speculations regarding the correctness of the election, given the intricate process (a second ballot was needed due to a number of invalid votes). In reply to these voices, the Synod emphasized the demographic, economic and other changes that have affected Transylvania in the last century and to the bare fact that no single see can look after such a large territory and number of faithful (since this metropolitanate is actually the largest of all). Most significantly, the inhabitants of Sibiu took the matter to the streets, asking that the split should not occur. When the Holy Synod met on 17-18 January 2006, Transylvanians demonstrated not far from the patriarchal palace in Bucharest where the sessions were being held. Additionally, some legal action was started in Sibiu against the decision of the Synod and an open letter was sent to the president of Romania. The Synod reinforced the previous decision regarding the new metropolitanate from Cluj-Napoca and decided that it will take the fourth honorary place among the sees in ROC, immediately after the see of Sibiu. In response to the concerns raised by many faithful that this will weaken the unity in the Church and national unity, it was decided that the hierarchs of the two metropolitanates will meet at least three times a year in order to work together to maintain and strengthen the health

of the spiritual life in Transylvania.

In addition to this important structural change, recently, on 8 February 2006, two new bishops were elected: Bishop Lucian, former auxiliary bishop for the archbishopric of Timișoara, for the vacant see of Caransabeș and Bishop Ambrozie, former auxiliary bishop for the archbishopric of Bucharest, for the vacant see of Giurgiu.

2. Social and Other Specific Activities

ROC has performed increasingly well its social and pastoral duties during the period under scrutiny. Although it has fallen victim to criticism in the media for the lack of involvement in solving contemporary social problems, most such allegations have been unwarranted and have been conducted by misinformation or unqualified misconception. While we shall see some of the hot disputes on religious aspects that have stirred up Romanian society soon below, we want simply to point out a few of the events that are worth emphasizing in order to give some idea of the usual specific activities of ROC.

First, it should be mentioned the concern for Romanian Society at the macro-level, reflected for instance in the decisions following events such as the international conference "Churches and North-Atlantic Values" that took place on 3-4 June 2002 under the auspices of the Romanian Patriarchate in collaboration with the "George C. Marshall-Romania" Association and the "George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies" of Garmish-Pan-terkichen, Germany. As a result, ROC and all religious organizations in Roma-

nia have affirmed their support for the integration of Romania into the structures of NATO.

Further along this line, on 5 November 2003, the Romanian patriarchate signed a protocol of collaboration with the Ministry of Interior for the prevention of, and fight against, the trafficking of human beings. Thus the role ROC is playing in the education of young people, who are more likely to fall victims to such abuse, and of their parents, is notable.⁵

ROC has had a very important effect on the fund-raising campaigns conducted for the victims of massive flooding in 2005, by collecting money itself from the faithful and by collaborating with State Institutions such as the National Television Network (TVR). Local involvement of the church in the rescue effort was extensive in regions such as Timiș (Archbishopric of Timișoara), Galați (Bishopric of Lower Danube) and others.⁶

On a more local level now, one has to emphasize the spiritual message that has been conveyed by ROC by means of pilgrimages and canonizations. Yearly, pilgrims are welcomed at different pilgrimage sites all over Romania, notably in Iași (Jassy), Bucharest and the Monastery of Necula (Transylvania). In the last few years, several new saints have been canonized by ROC. Among them, one must notice the Metropolitan Peter Moghyla of Kiev (17th c., canonized 2002), Metropolitan Teodosie of Wallachia⁷ of the monastery of Brazi, martyr (17th c., canonized 2003), Vasile of Poiana Mărului, monk (18th c., canonized 2003), Metropolitan Dosoftei of Moldavia⁸ (17th c., canonized 2005),

Onufrie, monk at Sihăstria Voronei (19th c., canonized 2005), starets Gheorghe of Cernica and Căldărușani (18th -19th c., canonized 2005) and Metropolitan Grigore Dascălu of Wallachia (18th-19th c., to be canonized). All these new canonizations have been made known widely to the faithful who were invited to share in the joy of the church. Furthermore, the cult of the recently discovered relics of the late third-century martyrs Epictet and Astion has been sanctioned by ROC and plays a growing role in the spiritual life of the Dobrodja area.⁹

⁵ *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, 15 (2003), no. 307. We apologise for the lack of precise references to *VO*. The Journal has been consulted online during 2005 but has been not accessible in Jan-Feb 2006 – at the time this text was written – due to the construction of a new website of the Romanian Patriarchate. Nevertheless, its archive should soon be back at <http://www.vestitorul.ro/>

⁶ *News Bulletin* of the Romanian Patriarchate, 2005, 5-6: <http://www.patriarhia.ro/eng/pub/index.php?no=52005&page=7>

⁷ Designated of old as Ungrovlahia (Hungaro-Walachia).

⁸ “Moldavia” is surely an English rendering of the Romanian noun “Moldova”. They are both used to designate the name of an independent state and the name of a historical region in Romania. For the sake of disambiguation, this paper will employ “Moldavia” for the historical region in Romania and “Moldova” for the independent state whose official name is the “Republic of Moldova”.

⁹ It seems that the 2001 discovery could bear a particular significance, in that it may be the first time in modern hagio-

3. Relations with Other Churches and Religious Groups

Generally, ROC has established and maintained a good relationship with all Churches and religious groups in Romania. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, though relatively new in Romania, has already been well established on the agenda of ROC and is observed in good faith in all major cities across the country.

The dispute with the Greek Catholic Church has not been solved yet, but the dialogue at the top carried out by the Joint Orthodox-Greek-Catholic Commission continues. For instance, following the Seventh Meeting of the Commission that took place on 1 October 2002 in Arad, the Holy Synod of ROC expressed on November 26-27 the hope for an intensification of the collaboration in social matters.¹⁰ The Eighth Meeting took place on 23 September 2003 at Baia-Mare. The participants of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church insisted on the eventual appeal to law, while the representatives of ROC insisted for their part on the necessity to allow communities to decide over the solving of patrimonial disputes.¹¹ In fact, this difference of approach for solving the dispute is crucial. Thus, though gracious, the higher-level dialogue has not as yet had a tangible result; on the local level the situation is far from being friendly. First, events such as the religious and cultural manifestation that took place on 22 October 2005 in Alba Iulia, dedicated to the holy confessors of Transylvania (who fought against unitarism in its incipient phase), however justified they may be, do little to sustain

a warm climate for dialogue. Second, with regard to the first-hand problem of the patrimony and more precisely to giving back church buildings, several of those cases have been won in court by the Greek-Catholics, such as that concerning the cathedral of Oradea that was taken into custody in December 2005. Most recently, it came the turn of Holy Archangels Cathedral in Satu-Mare, to the great dislike of the previous owners, the Orthodox faithful. After they were shown the door, apparently without courtesy, on 17 February 2006 (raising, as a result, a protest from the Orthodox bishopric), the first Eucharist of the Greek-Catholics on Sunday the 19th could be held only thanks to massive police presence around the church.¹² With regard to academic life we should note a symposium on "Religious Groups and the State" that took place on 11-12 May 2002 at the Orthodox Faculty of

graphical scholarship when we have both the act of martyrdom and the archaeological witness. Cf. also I.P. David, 'Martirii de la Halmyris în contextul misionar la început de mileniu III. Descoperirea moaștelor sfinților Epictet și Astion și cei împreună cu dânșii', *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, 120 (2002), 10-12, pp. 322-355

¹⁰ *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, 14 (2002), no. 302

¹¹ *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, 15 (2003), no. 320-321

¹² *Informația Zilei*, XIV, 3790, Tuesday, 21st of February 2006, <http://www.informatia-zilei.ro/SM/bm/20.02.06/social.htm>. Subsequently, the Orthodox members of the clergy who led the demonstrations agreed with the authorities that they had exaggerated and hoped for a peaceful solution to the disagreement.

the University of Cluj-Napoca. Participants from different Christian denominations met in order to analyze the different patterns of a functional relationship between Church and State in contemporary Europe. On 3-4 February 2003, a colloquium was held in Braşov under the title “*Charta Oecumenica* and the Churches of Romania” where there were leaders and delegates of the Churches from Romania (ROC, The Roman Catholic Church, Evangelical Churches of Sibiu and Cluj, The Reformed Church, the Armenian Church, the Greek Catholic Church and the Anglican Church) but also of other international or local ecumenical organizations. *Charta* proved to be a factor for unity in dialogue.¹³

Otherwise, in 2003 AIDRom – the Ecumenical Church Association of Romania celebrated the 10th anniversary of its creation. It continues to work hard as ‘a platform for ecumenical dialogue and as a Financing & Development Agency for Churches and the Civil Society in Romania’.¹⁴

It is also noteworthy that on 28-29 March 2003, at the patriarchal Palace in Bucharest, the Romanian Patriarchate and the St Gerhard Foundation in Germany organized a meeting of the commissions of the Christian churches in Romania: ROC, the Roman Catholic, the Greek Catholic and the Evangelical. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the project of compiling a Christian *Martyrology* of Romania that would comprise all the martyrs of Christian faith under communism.¹⁵

On 27-30 October 2005, a conference with the title “From Theological Thought to Social Action – the Roman-

ian Reality and European Standards” was organised at Durău by the representatives in Romania of the “Konrad Adenauer” German Foundation, with the support of both the Presidential Administration and the Metropolitan See of Moldavia and Bukovina. Representatives of many religious groups and of state authorities debated on the meaning and implementation of the concept of philanthropy in Romania, hoping for a better legal frame in which the different religious groups could work independently or in partnerships.¹⁶

4. ROC and the Civil Society: Hotly Debated Issues

The Cathedral of the Salvation of the (Romanian) People

One of the most disputed issues of the last years was over the necessity of building a large Patriarchal Cathedral in Bucharest (with financial contribution from the State budget). The need for a larger church building, as such, has not been much disputed lately, as most have

¹³ Dan Sandu, ‘*Charta Oecumenica* și Bisericele din România’, *Candela Moldovei* (2003), 1-2, p. 15.

¹⁴ <http://www.evkb.org/aidrom/index.htm>

¹⁵ *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, 15 (2003), no. 310; ‘Credincioșii uciși în închisorile comuniste vor fi incluși în martirologiu’. *Curierul Național*, Monday, March 31, 2003: <http://www.curierulnational.ro/index.php?page=articol&editie=163&art=9597>

¹⁶ *News Bulletin* of the Romanian Patriarchate, 2005, 5: <http://www.patriarhia.ro/eng/pub/index.php?no=52005&page=6>

come to realize that the present church that acts as the Patriarchal cathedral is unsatisfactory by any measure, other aspects have remained bones of contention for years. To this day, the name itself (coming from pre-war nationalist Romania) gives many an occasion to mock its patriotic/pathetic sound.¹⁷ More practically however, the main debate revolved around the location of the huge new building. Two places have been allocated successively during the last years, but they met with the resistance of the City Hall authorities or of different groups representing the civil society. In late 2005, land was given to ROC just behind the mammoth Parliament building (Ceaușescu's People's House), on Arsenal Hill. The urban planners and architects of Bucharest have come to an agreement that would allow for the church to be the tallest building in all of Romania (ca 114 m in height), which will make it visible from all corners of Bucharest. The cathedral will be built with money collected by ROC and with the collaboration of the state.

Bioethics: Further Decisions

The challenges put forth by bioethics have continued to give work to the National Committee for Bioethics in recent years. This Committee evaluates the work of three local commissions in three university centres in Romania: Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca and Iași. On 15-17 March 2004 and on 5-7 July 2005, the recommendations of the Committee in favour of the transplantation of organs and against the practices of abortion and euthanasia were endorsed by the Synod of ROC. Abor-

tion and euthanasia are considered grave sins that contradict Christian teaching. Furthermore, ROC insists on amplifying efforts to educate contemporary people with regard to the meaning of human sexuality and of life more generally, in view of avoiding such sins.¹⁸

Building in a Natural Reservation: the Monastery on the Peak of Ceahlău Mountain

One other recent dispute refers to the desire of the Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Bukovina to erect a pilgrims' house next to the little monastery on top of mountain Ceahlău in the Eastern Carpathians. The presence of the monks there is already a matter of dispute, since the entire area is a protected natural reservation. The news of the Metropolitanate erecting an allegedly large building to improve the harsh life of the monks living there has stirred up representatives of the civil society that accuse the Church (more precisely, the Metropolitanate) of a discrete understanding with political figures of highest rank in order to build, illegally as it may seem, a religious establishment in a natural reservation.¹⁹

¹⁷ The choice for Holy Apostle Andrew as patron saint (in view of his allegedly legendary mission on the 'Romanian' soil) only adds to that impression.

¹⁸ Quoted by Trinitas Press Office, <http://www.mmb.ro/ro/index.php?pagina=50&data=2005070808>

¹⁹ For an example of criticism with an acid tongue, see <http://www.romania-libera.ro/editie/index.php?url=articol&tabel=z12112005&idx=58>

The Gold-Mining Project at Roşia Montană

There was very serious debate surrounding a project of gold-mining in Roşia Montană (Transylvania) by the Canadian company “Rosia Montana Gold Corporation” that would probably generate a major ecological and human disfiguration of the area. ROC came up with its own judgment on 11 November 2003. Finding support in the previous statement of the Romanian Academy against the project, and with the prospect of seeing the local churches and cemeteries being moved to another area, ROC declared its opposition to the gold-mining project.

The “Exorcism” at Tanacu Abbey

Few events, politics aside, have created more turmoil in recent years than the unfortunate event when a young woman died after, and allegedly because of, being subject to extreme exorcism-like treatment by the priest at the Abbey of Tanacu (Moldavia). The mentally deranged young woman named Irina had been under treatment in a hospital in the city of Vaslui. A while after being released, she sought spiritual treatment in the summer of 2005 at the abbey “Sf Treime” where father Daniel Corogeanu, 29, helped by the nuns, tried to deliver her from the evil by prayers. Most unfortunately, her seemingly violent behaviour left them with no choice but to tie her up on an improvised wooden cross-like bed/stretchers so that she could not harm herself or others. It seems that her poor health condition could hardly permit the ingestion of food. In the end, when she experienced difficulty in breathing and vital signs deteriorated, an ambu-

lance was called. Most probably, the ambulance arrived late, little could be done, and the young woman died (whether before getting into the ambulance or inside it, is still to be decided.) This is the story in short, which proved later to be a very intricate one. The priest and his assisting nuns were arrested and accused. In late 2005, an autopsy proved that Irina had actually died as a result of an extra-dose of adrenaline given to her in the ambulance. Thus, everything seems to indicate a case of medical incompetence and not one of “spiritual torture”.

Nevertheless, what is interesting here is not the story in itself, as much as the debate on the alleged medieval practices of the Orthodox Church, incapable of facing modernity, as exemplified in one newspaper title: “Romania in the Middle Ages”. Countless newspaper articles and television programs debated the issue. The attitude of ROC was at times baffling: if in the end it was balanced as it waited for the justice departments to do their work, it reacted at first by the local bishop abruptly suspending the priest, mostly due to the outrage of the media outlets. On the other hand, most of these same enraged journalists proved to lack even the simplest knowledge about the practices of the Orthodox Church.²⁰

²⁰ It took most of the journalists several days to learn finally about the inexistence of the ‘exorcism’ proper in the practices of the Orthodox Church and to attempt to dissociate the Orthodox practice from whatever knowledge they had most likely gained from second-hand horror movies.

On the positive side, it must be said that the whole controversy allowed for a useful discussion on the quality of monastic life in Romania, on the quality of those who take monastic vows and of those who get ordained in monasteries. The Holy Synod has recommended a deepening of the spiritual screening process by which candidates to both monastic life and ordination are to be welcomed.

Does Artistic Freedom Allow for Blasphemy?

December 2005 witnessed yet another controversial event that brought the church face to face with some representatives of civil society, and with intellectuals and artists. An award-winning play on a Bible-related theme, which had been written in 1992, was produced at a minor theatre in Iași. The author, Mrs Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, is a distinguished intellectual, political analyst and journalist, frequently seen on TV as a spirited voice in support of the interests of civil society. The play, entitled “Evangheliștii” [The Gospel Writers] had been rather unknown to the greater public until it was about to be put on stage in Iași. At that time, on the 2nd of December, Patriarch Teoctist and Roman Catholic Archbishop of Bucharest Ioan Robu both condemned it, though in different statements, for offending Christian teaching, for being a blasphemy to the life and faith of the Romanian people. The story is a fictional account of how Paul and the other disciples invented Christianity at the expense of a naïve Jesus who has Mary Magdalene as a companion. The erotic scenes in particular boosted the popular reaction

against the play. Though it was a very limited event (in both time and space), the play managed to bring about fresh discussions on key issues such as freedom of the creators, artists and the artistic act, on the acceptability of ecclesiastical or religious censorship, and on the enforcement of such censorship by political authorities.

5. ROC and the Media

The manifestation of the ROC-owned media among public media is rather unequally present and mostly indistinct. One of the reasons might be that it is sustained chiefly by efforts in other places than Bucharest. Thus, even if on a local level, here and there, one may acknowledge the sizeable presence of Orthodox media, its absence in the capital city from among the central media services is most unfortunate. However, it should be said that there exist in Romania at this time five radio stations under the auspices of various administrative divisions of ROC. Alongside the longer broadcasting stations, *Trinitas* from Iași (Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Bukovina)²¹ and *Renașterea* from Cluj-Napoca (Archbishopric of Vad, Cluj and Feleac),²² since December 2001 three new radio stations emerged: *Reîntregirea* from Alba-Iulia (Archbishopric of Alba-Iulia),²³ *Dobrogea* from Constanța (Archbishopric of Tomis)²⁴ and *Logos* (Metropolitanate of Oltenia).²⁵

²¹ <http://radio.trinitas.ro/>

²² <http://www.radiorenasterea.ro>

²³ <http://reintregirea.ro/reintregirea.html>

²⁴ <http://www.arhiepiscopeiatomisului.ro>

²⁵ <http://www.radiologos.ro/>

All these stations have websites and can be listened to live on the internet.

Of all these, by far the most significant air broadcasting coverage is offered by Trinitas radio station from Iași (broadcasting since early 1998), that can be listened to from over 60% of the area of Romania, including major cities such as Bucharest, Ploiești, Cluj and Brașov.²⁶ Since late 2001, Trinitas is a member of the “European Conference of Christian Radio Stations”.

Complementarily, *Lumina*, the “first Christian newspaper”, as it is advertised, has been launched in Iași on 7 February 2005, as ‘an initiative of the Orthodox Laity supported by the Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Bukovina’.²⁷ With regard to the presence of ROC and aspects of Christian and religious life more generally in the programs of state-owned or privately-owned media channels, we have to notice that it has been rather discrete in the case of the state-owned ones, and reduced to a minimum in the case of the privately-owned ones. Of course, when something controversial or worthy of censure relating to the ROC occurs, coverage increases with the hope of increasing ratings.

An event worth mentioning here was the press colloquium “Church in Mass-Media and Mass-Media in Church”, organized by the Trinitas Institute of Iași at Durău on 19-21 June 2003. This colloquium had a few interesting conclusions. It was first agreed that mass-media is an important chapter of the social thought of the Church, and that the lay press and church press should relate to each other in a complementary fashion. The participants welcomed the decision of the ROC Synod to cre-

ate a new section within the faculties of theology in Bucharest, Iași, Cluj and Craiova: “Theology – Communication Sciences and Public Relations”. In their turn, the representatives of the lay press expressed the desire for more openness from the Church toward mass-media and asked for active press offices in every eparchial centre. At the end, the need for an Orthodox Press Agency and an Association of Christian Journalists was underscored.²⁸

6. Theological Education

The First National Conference of the Faculties of Orthodox Theology in Romania took place at Durău on 8-10 September 2003. The activity of the faculties of theology, under double jurisdiction, of the Church and of the universities, was analyzed and several proposals were made toward the betterment of educational progress, e.g. that more young people should be attracted to study theology not so much in view of ordination as in view of strengthening missionary activity, with them working in various fields as graduates of theology programs.

The proposal that this conference should occur regularly (once every two years) was fulfilled in 2005, when the Second National Conference was organized at Brâncoveanu Monastery–Sâmbăta Summer Academy on 25-28 September,

²⁶ *Candela Moldovei*, 14 (2005), 10-1, p. 37.

²⁷ <http://www.ziarullumina.ro/>

²⁸ *Candela Moldovei*, 7-8 (2003): <http://editura.trinitas.ro/cm/articol.php?an=2003&luna=07-08&art=3>

under the general theme “The Faculty of Theology in the Life and Mission of the Church.” Among the resolutions were: 1) a Commission for Deontology should be set up for the case of negative aspects of university activity; 2) in addition to their academic activity, professors should be engaged as parish priests so they have a better knowledge of the pastoral and missionary reality; 3) the curricula should be adapted and harmonized in such a way that the educational process should answer both the contemporary needs of the Church and the European structural reforms decided at Bologna; 4) attention to spiritual and liturgical training should be intensified in order to counter the effects of secularization; 5) theological instruction should focus more on practical issues. The next meeting was set to take place in 2007.

On another level, it should be underscored, if only briefly, that ROC organized or supported a number of national and international conferences of some importance. Among them, the International Conference on Patristics devoted to the memory of the Romanian patristic scholar Ioan G. Coman (Bucharest, 7-14 October 2002) and the international symposium dedicated to the memory of Romanian theologian Dumitru Stăniloae at the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest (11-12 November 2003). Apart from these, many official ROC delegates participated actively in recent years in inter-orthodox, ecumenical or simply scientific congresses, that are too numerous to mention individually.²⁹

Finally here, we should briefly take note of the passing away during recent years of several theologians and churchmen

of note, who served ROC with distinction during their lives. Thus, we honour the memory of Rev. Prof. Ion Bria (d. July 2, 2002), a professor of Orthodox Theology and an internationally acclaimed specialist in ecumenical studies; of Archimandrite Sofian Boghiu of Antim Monastery in Bucharest (d. September 14, 2002), a widely respected spiritual father and icon painter; of Rev. Prof. Constantin Galeriu (d. August 10, 2003), a professor of Orthodox Theology and an immensely popular spiritual father and preacher; and of His Eminence Antonie Plămădeală, Metropolitan of Transylvania (d. August 29, 2005), a specialist in ecumenical studies and an accomplished diplomat for ROC's external relations.

7. ROC's Publications and Other Titles in Theology and Religion

The publishing houses run by different administrative centres of ROC have not lately had any major improvement in either the quality or number of publications or in their visibility on the book and media market. The scientific theological periodicals of different eparchies, for instance, have yet to come close to the high standard they used to hold, paradoxically, under communism.³⁰

²⁹ Some of them will be mentioned further below when the relationship of ROC with the other Orthodox and non-Orthodox Churches will be discussed.

³⁰ Decent quality can be found however in many of them, such as for instance *Altarul Banatului* (Timișoara), *Revista Teologică* (Sibiu) or *Teologie și Viață* [formerly *Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei*] (Iași).

Recently, the Bucharest periodical *Studii Teologice* (edited jointly by all the faculties of theology of Romania) has started a new series with 4 issues a year, with an articulated desire to help boost theological research, which seems at present to be on hold. The most respected of the “official” publishing houses related to ROC, the “Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al BOR” (Publishing House of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of ROC from Bucharest) has recently launched a very decent website that may lead one to hope for the betterment of future editorial work, as well.³¹ Generally, it has to be said that it is still much to be desired that ROC-related publications come more to the fore on the general editorial market. At this moment they are simply and sadly not in the eye of the more general educated public.

Most of the religious publications of an Orthodox Christian preference, however, are the outcome of the activity of other private publishing houses that are more or less in connection with ROC ecclesiastical centres or publish under the patronage (with the blessing) of this or that bishop. At this moment, the most active ones seem to be “Deisis” of Sibiu (probably the most solid of all post-communist publishing houses that have specialized in publishing theological books) and “Sophia” of Bucharest. The previously strong posture of “Anastasia” Publishing House from Bucharest seems lately to have diminished, at least to some degree.³²

A uniquely acclaimed title during recent years has been *Le Régime de la synodalité selon la législation canonique, œcuménique, du I-er millénaire* (Editura

Ametist, 1999) by Rev. Prof. Nicolae Dură. In 2001 and 2002, the author was recognized for this book by prestigious institutions, such as France’s Legion of Honour (for promoting the culture of French expression) and the Romanian Academy with its highest award in history.³³

To depart now from the explicitly “Orthodox” publications, we should note here that a few periodicals run by institutions related to other churches have been founded recently and offer a good prospect. By way of example, *Studia Theologica* (founded 2002), an

³¹ <http://www.editurapatriarhie.ro>. Respectable work is being carried out by other “official” ROC publishing houses, e.g. ‘Trinitas’ Publishing House in Iași, which however equally lacks visibility and needs promotion on the market.

³² It is hardly possible to mention all their significant titles of recent years. To give some direction nevertheless, we would have to go, for their creativity and renewal of the theological discourse, with works such as Ioan I. Ică, Jr. and Germano Marani, eds., *Gândirea socială a Bisericii* [The Social Thought of the Church] (Sibiu, Deisis, 2003) and Mihail Neamțu’s book of provocative theological essays *Bufnița din dărâmături. Insomnii teologice* [Owl among Ruins. Theological Insomnias], Bucharest, Anastasia, 2005; or with relevant translations from the works by contemporary Orthodox theologians, such as Nikolaos Matzoukas, Georgios Mantzaridis (Editura Bizantină), Jean-Claude Larchet (Sophia) and Tristram Engelhardt Jr. (Deisis).

³³ See here a book-review of this 1023 pages volume by Jean-Claude Larchet: http://www.orthodoxie.com/2005/06/recension_pere_.html

e-journal edited by the Greek-Catholic Faculty of Cluj-Napoca, maintains good quality and has an ecumenical approach, publishing in different languages.³⁴ Another example could be the journal *Dialog Teologic* edited by the Roman Catholic Faculty of Theology of Iași that has continued to give the floor to the dialogue between Roman Catholic and Orthodox Theology. In both these and in other periodicals affiliated with churches/institutions other than Orthodox, there exists a significant contribution from the part of Orthodox theologians as well.

To move further, we cannot avoid complaining about the generally underprivileged status of theology and religious studies on the agendas of the private, prominent publishing houses. Solid religious titles are not entirely lacking, however. Leading Romanian publishing houses such as “Polirom” from Iași and “Humanitas” from Bucharest have displayed an increased interest in books on theology and religion. If only to mention the major editorial events, we have first to praise the “Septuagint project” of the Polirom Publishing House, by which the first scientifically made and commented translation of the LXX has been made available as a result of the work of independent scholars (four of six projected volumes have appeared). The same publishing house has recently offered translations of solid theological works such as Claudio Moreschini and Enrico Norelli’s *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature* or Jaroslav Pelikan’s *The Christian Tradition* (first two volumes as yet). Since 2005, Polirom has taken over the publishing and promotion of the young but solid scientific

journal *Chora. Revue d'études anciennes et médiévales. Philosophie, théologie, sciences* (issue 2/2004). As for “Humanitas”, the other leading publishing house, we may refer here to the publishing of the theological writings of André Scrima, a leading Romanian figure of the last century. Some seven volumes have appeared so far, most of them during the last four years.

The editing of new and older translations into Romanian from patristic and post-patristic literature in the last five years deserves here a mention. “Deisis” (Sibiu) published new translations from Isaac the Syrian, Maximus the Confessor, Gregory Palamas (part of a large project) and a volume containing *Three Byzantine Lives of Theotokos* (Epiphanius the Monk, Symeon Metaphrastes, Maximus the Confessor, apocrypha). “Anastasia” (Bucharest) published homilies by Gregory Palamas (a second volume of three) and several brief texts by Jerome, Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa and John Damascene (in two series, Latin and Greek Fathers, respectively). “Humanitas” (Bucharest) has continued to republish Dumitru Stăniloae’s edition of *Philocalia* and has also published several works by Augustine. This Latin Father is the focus of a bilingual series from “Dacia” (Cluj-Napoca) and is also an author for two other publishing houses: “Polirom” (Iași) and “Nemira” (Bucharest). The former published also translations of the *Septuagint* and of *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, while the latter republished older translations from John Chrysostom’s writings. Another

³⁴ <http://www.studiatheologica.cnet.ro/prezentare.asp>

publishing house from Bucharest, “Sophia”, has published in its series of “Biblical Commentaries” older translations from Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Euthymios Zigabenos and Theophylact of Bulgaria. Finally, some previously published translations of works by John Chrysostom were re-edited by the “Publishing House of the Biblical and Missionary Institute of ROC” and by “Christiana”, both from Bucharest.³⁵

Finally, one may find definitely noteworthy for the scientific study of religion in recent years the activity of two international journals devoted to the broad field of the history of religions: *Archaeus. Journal in the History of Religions* (founded 1997, new international series since 2001) and *Studia Asiatica. International Journal of Asian Studies* (founded 2000). Both of them are edited by the Romanian Association for the History of Religions and by the Centre for the History of Religions at the University of Bucharest.³⁶

B. ROC’s International Activities

1. ROC and Its “Diaspora”

From the point of view of its structure outside Romania and its spiritual influence in general, ROC has continued to suffer from a heated situation in more than one place on the globe. The issues that have kept an inflamed relationship with different groups or authorities outside Romania can be most probably sorted out in two categories according to the reason behind them: of an ethnic and of an ethical character, respec-

tively; all of them, of course, come down from a different interpretation of passed times.

Among the problems of an *ethnic* character, we must mention here at least two that have not been solved but have been prudently tackled within the last years. First, there is the ongoing offence and hardship that the faithful of the ROC Metropolitanate of Bessarabia (The Republic of Moldova) apparently endure from the part of the clergy of the more predominantly present Metropolitanate of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moldova. The fact that the government of Moldova, permanently hostile to the recognition of the “new” structure under ROC,³⁷ was forced to acknowledge its right to exist as a consequence of a decision in the European Court for Human Rights (31 July 2002), has not really changed the miserable state of affairs imposed on the faithful, particularly on the clergy. ROC can do little to soften the hardships, unless better times should come, when a real dialogue could be carried out with the Russian Orthodox Church. Another confusing situation has been created and sustained by the refusal of the leaders of the Serbian Orthodox Church to allow a bishopric instead of a vicariate for a Romanian Orthodox Bishopric in Serbia and Mon-

³⁵ I would like to thank here my friend Rev. Dragoş Bahrim (Iaşi) for the helpful information he provided me with, which allowed me to compose this brief note on patristic literature.

³⁶ www.rahr.ro

³⁷ In 1992, ROC had ‘unilaterally’ reactivated the Metropolitanate, on the basis of ethnic and historical arguments.

tenegro seated in Vârșeț. ROC has been criticised for expansionism, intrusion on the spiritual territory of the Serbian Orthodox Church and attempting to “Romanianize” a neighbouring region in Serbia. This attitude might be partly due to the approval by the Romanian state leaders of the last NATO intervention in former Yugoslavia.

We may draw attention, on the other hand, to the problems of an *ethical* character with which ROC has had to deal. Until recently, ROC has had little success in finding a way to bring closer those communities in the West that are composed of people who fled into exile during communism and who have continued to wish for radical changes amongst the ROC hierarchs. In their eyes, former collaborating hierarchs should have stepped down to visibly leave ROC cleansed of any spot left after all the undignified activities under the former regime. However, a major victory was won in spring of last year in the case of part of the Romanian community in Paris (with a hopeful view toward a soon-to-happen full embrace). On the occasion of the ordination of a new auxiliary bishop for the ROC Metropolitan See for Western and Southern Europe, fresh solid steps were made toward reconciliation with the Romanian old parish “Holy Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Rafael” of Rue Jean de Beauvais. Under the temporary spiritual guidance of the Romanian Archbishop of Detroit in the USA (!), part of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA), this parish church has welcomed the ordination of a bishop from ROC, a greatly appreciated step toward reconciliation between the French-

Romanian community and ROC, but also towards reconciliation between the ROC ecclesiastical structures in the USA and the Romanian ecclesiastical structures that belong to OCA. Further moves are to be carefully judged if full reconciliation is to be achieved.³⁸

2. ROC and Its Inter-Orthodox Relations

At the heart of the “inter-orthodox” relations must remain the fundamental conviction that there is but one Orthodox Church. Sadly, due to the present state of relations this belief appears less as a reality than as a historically (re)constructed image. For its part, ROC has always valued highly its relations with the other orthodox Churches but the results of this attempt have been uneven. We have already mentioned the difficulties ROC has in its dialogue with the Serbian and Russian Orthodox Churches, respectively. The relation with these two has remained sour during recent years. Maybe the first event worthy of being mentioned here with regard to some improvement of the relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church is the participation of a Romanian delegation of theologians led by Metropol-

³⁸ It is worth noting too that the newly ordained bishop, Marc Alric, a Frenchman by birth, is the first non-Romanian to become member of the Holy Synod of ROC. Some saw in this a most auspicious sign of a step away from the narrowness of an ethnically defined, faulty ecclesiology allegedly professed by ROC (and in fact by the better part of the autocephalous Orthodox Churches).

itan Daniel of Moldavia and Bukovina at an international conference organized in Moscow in November 2003. On that occasion it appears that a first invitation was made to Patriarch Alexey II to visit Romania.³⁹ On a different, but equally high level, the Romanian minister for foreign affairs, Mihai Răzvan Ungureanu, was welcomed in Moscow by the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church on 12 October 2005. Though it is likely that the discussion did not exceed the exchange of courtesies, the very occurrence of the visit is not to be overlooked.⁴⁰ Finally, another event could have borne some significance for the relationship between the two churches. On the 12-13 November 2005, Patriarch Alexey came to Kishinev, the capital of Moldova, in order to have a new bishop ordained for Nisporeni. This visit is Patriarch Alexey's second after the one paid in 1990: it is thus the first after the controversy with the two opposing Metropolitanates.⁴¹ What message was sent to the Holy Synod of ROC by this visit is not clear, but it is not hard to guess either. No official statement has yet been made by either part. By far, ROC enjoys the most cordial relations with the Orthodox hierarchy in the Greek speaking world, especially with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Church of Greece, but also with the patriarchates of Jerusalem and Alexandria and with the Church of Albania. Significant visits highlighted this rich dynamics. In June 2003, the Archbishop of Athens and all Greece, Christodoulos (together with a large delegation) paid an official visit to Romania at the invitation of Patriarch Teoctist.⁴² Later that year, in September, a visit was made

by the (late) Petros VII, Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa.⁴³ Still in 2003, in November, another noteworthy visit was paid by Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania.⁴⁴ Finally, the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I came to Romania as a guest of ROC, in 2004 and 2005. On this latter occasion, in March 2005, he was a guest of honour, most meaningfully, at the celebration of the 120th anniversary of the granting of the autocephaly and 80th of the elevation to the status of patriarchate. All in all, these visits, as well as the few visits paid back by Romanian official delegations especially at Constantinople/Istanbul, made it clear to many that a warm climate based on respect and love has been clearly established between ROC and the churches in the Greek-speaking world.

Finally, mention has to be made of the 9th Annual meeting of the General

³⁹ More recently, in November 2005, another small delegation of three Romanian theologians was invited to another conference on the 'Eschatological Teaching of the Church', but this probably brought little or no benefit for the better understanding between the hierarchs of the two Churches.

⁴⁰ See the news from the Press Service of the Russian Patriarchate: <http://eng.sedmitza.ru/index.html?sid=69&did=1513>

⁴¹ Same source, <http://eng.sedmitza.ru/index.html?sid=70&did=1565>

⁴² *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, 15 (2003), no. 316-317.

⁴³ *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, 15 (2003), no. 320-321.

⁴⁴ *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, 15 (2003), no. 324.

Assembly of the “Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy” (IAO) in Bucharest, on the June 27-30, 2002. Under the title “Globalization and Orthodoxy”, the IAO meeting has focused on the role of Orthodoxy in the EU, on the appreciation of the Orthodox culture as a factor of unity in Eastern Europe and on the mediating role for Europe with other cultures.⁴⁵

3. ROC and Its Ecumenical Relations

The many ecumenical actions that ROC has undertaken in the recent years and, indeed, the truly honest hope of the majority of the Romanian Orthodox for dialogue and eventual communion with other Christians, have made ROC appear as, probably the most ecumenically-minded Orthodox Church today. Surely the most memorable event among all ecumenical acts of ROC during the interval 2002-6 was the visit paid by Patriarch Teoctist to the Vatican, at the invitation of Pope John Paul II, on 7-14 October 2002.⁴⁶ The visit was in response to the historical visit that the pope had made on 7-9 May 1999 to Bucharest. The delegation was made up of Their Eminences the Metropolitans Daniel of Moldavia and Bukovina, Teofan of Oltenia, Iosif of the ROC See for Western and Meridional Europe and Archbishop Nifon of Târgoviște, the Rev. Professors Dumitru Popescu, Nicolae Necula and Ioan Chivu, the Patriarchal Counsellor Rev. Michael Țița, the Press Officer of the Romanian Patriarchate, Rev. Costel Stoica, and Deacon Costin Spiridon. After a first welcome at the airport by Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for

Christian Unity, Patriarch Teoctist and the rest of the Romanian delegation were warmly welcomed by Pope John II in St. Peter's Square in the Vatican. Among the many activities of the delegation, later that week, on 12 October, the theologians of the ROC delegation had a discussion with members of the *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity* with reference to the theological dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. Then the members of ROC's delegation were guests at the Apostolic Palace, where Patriarch Teoctist and Pope John Paul II signed a *Joint Statement* reaffirming the need for dialogue between the two Churches and the desire for collaboration in various fields.⁴⁷ First, the document insists on the relationship between this meeting and the visit to Romania the pope had

⁴⁵ V. Fătu, ‘Globalizare și Ortodoxie’, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, 120 (2002), 1-6, pp. 160-165; *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 120 (2002), 7-9, pp. 7-13. See also http://www.eiao.org/english/assembly_meetings/bucharest.htm

⁴⁶ See the dedicated ‘Special Issue’ of the *News Bulletin* of the Romanian Patriarchate, (2002) 7-8: <http://www.patriarhia.ro/eng/pub/archives.php#> and, in detail, ‘Cele șapte zile ale vizitei Preafericitului Părinte Patriarh Teoctist și a delegației Bisericii Ortodoxe Române la Vatican și în Italia (7-14 octombrie 2002)’ *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, 120 (2002), 10-12, pp. 6-93.

⁴⁷ The English version may be found at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2002/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20021012_john-paul-ii-teoctist_en.html

made two years before. Second, it recommends that the mutual respect shown by the pope and the patriarch should be seen by the faithful of the two churches in Romania as a model to love one another. Third, the document acknowledges the existence of a solid common foundation and promotes full communion in the future: 'Our relations must reflect the real and profound communion in Christ, that already exists between us, even if it is not yet full. In fact, we recognize with joy that we possess together the tradition of the undivided Church centred on the mystery of the Eucharist, to which the saints we have in common in our calendars bear witness'. A fourth point expressed a concern for the difficulties encountered by the *Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church* and a hope for the reactivation of the activity of the commission. Finally, in a fifth point, mentioned is made of a common witness the Christians of both East and West are called to give in an enlarging Europe.

Among the ecumenical services held in the presence of Patriarch Teoctist and the other ROC delegates, the most significant were two. First, a religious service was held during the afternoon of the 12th of October in the church of *Saint Bartholomew in the Tiberine Island* dedicated to the witnesses of faith in the 20th century, among whom many hierarchs, priests and Orthodox, Catholic and Greek-Catholic faithful from Romania. Present at this ecumenical celebration were His Eminence Cardinal Camillo Ruini, Vicar General of Rome, His Eminence Cardinal Walter Kasper,

President of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity and His Eminence Cardinal Francis Eugene George, Archbishop of Chicago. Second, and more significantly, the next morning, Sunday the 13th, Patriarch Teoctist and the rest of the delegation attended the Mass celebrated by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in the basilica of Saint Peter, in the presence of more than six thousand faithful.

All in all, the visit has been highly successful and has been considered, both in Romania and elsewhere, one more significant step toward building a much desired reconciliation between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches.

Also in that line, we have to mention here an event that shows ROC's preoccupation with the continuation of the theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. On 13-14 March 2003, the Orthodox leaders of the *Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church*, Metropolitans John of Pergam and Gennadios of Sassima were welcomed in Bucharest for consultations with respect to the rejuvenation of the disturbed state of the dialogue after Baltimore 2000. The delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate visited several autocephalous Churches at that time in order to learn about their position with regard to the necessity of reinstating the dialogue, and on what terms. As a conclusion of the meeting, ROC favoured the continuation of the dialogue. However, the issue of uniatism must not be overlooked but treated with special attention in the con-

text of the more general issue of primacy in the Church. It was hoped as well that the Roman Catholic Church would do more in the future to apply the recommendations of the Balamand meeting.⁴⁸

ROC has organized or participated in a number of international ecumenical events. To give only one example, on 17-19 September 2002, the Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Bukovina in co-operation with the State Secretary for Religious Groups, the Roman Catholic diocese of Iași and the Roman Catholic diocese of Padua (Italy) organized the first international colloquium under the general theme "Church and Society" under the title "Being a Bishop Today: The Dignity and Difficulties of a Mission". The discussions revolved around three main themes: "The Bishop as Guardian of Local Church and of the Universal Faith"; "The Bishop as Teacher of the Gospel and Chances for Evangelization Today"; and "The Bishop, Spiritual Father in a Secular World".⁴⁹ The next edition of this colloquium was organized under the same auspices on 24-26 September 2003 at Praglia near Padua.⁵⁰ With respect to ROC's participation in international forums, we have to mention that during these years it has had a very active role in the life of the *Conference of European Churches*. CEC 12th Assembly Meeting took place in Trondheim, Norway, on 25 June – 2 July 2003 under the theme of "Jesus Christ Heals and Reconciles. Our Witness in Europe". The Romanian delegation was led by Metropolitan Daniel of Moldavia and Bukovina, member of the CEC presidium, and has contributed a great deal at different stages of the discussion, most

notably by sharing its experience in what concerns the problem of human trafficking and the relevance of the *Charta Oecumenica*.⁵¹ On 13-18 December 2003, the first meeting of the newly elected Central Committee of the CEC⁷ was summoned in Geneva. ROC was represented by Metropolitan Daniel in the presidium, His Eminence being also the ROC representative in the Joint Committee for Dialogue between CEC and CCEE (The Council of the European Episcopal Roman Catholic Conferences), while in the commission "Church and Society", ROC was represented by Rev. Alexandru Gherasim from the Faculty of Theology of Bucharest.⁵² Apart from that, as far as the activity of the *World Council of Churches* is concerned, ROC has just been honoured to have a member in

⁴⁸ *Vestitorul Ortodoxiei*, 15 (2003), no. 310.

⁴⁹ N. Dascălu, 'Colocviul ecumenic internațional A fi episcop astăzi. Demnitatea și dificultățile unei misiuni', *Candela Moldovei* (2002), 7-9: <http://www.trinitas.ro/editura/cm/articol.php?an=2002&luna=08-09&art=5>

⁵⁰ Daniel, Metropolitan of Moldavia and Bukovina, 'Prezență românească la Colocviul internațional ecumenic de la Padova', *Candela Moldovei* (2003), 10: 2-3

⁵¹ Most Rev. Ciprian Campineanu, 'Iisus Hristos vindecă și reconciliază – Mărturia noastră în Europa (A 12-a Adunare a Conferinței Bisericilor Europene)', *Candela Moldovei* (2003), 7-8:

<http://www.trinitas.ro/editura/cm/articol.php?an=2003&luna=07-08&art=1>

⁵² 'Noua conducere a Conferinței Bisericilor Europene (KEK)', *Candela Moldovei* (2003), 11-12, pp. 22-23.

the new WCC Executive Committee in the person of Archbishop Nifon of Târgoviște.⁵³

Finally, we have to make note of ROC's attitude on the occasion of the unfortunate death of Brother Roger from the community of Taizé, France. As it happened that the murderer was a Romanian woman, the public in Romania felt deep sympathy for the community at Taizé and all the people who cared for the movement. As a sort of response, ROC appointed one of the auxiliary bishops in France, Most Rev. Marc Alric to represent ROC at the funeral on 23 August 2005. The service was broadcast live by the main national TV channel, and other documentaries and discussions on Brother Roger and the Taizé movement were shown as well.

⁵³ <http://www.wcc-assembly.info/en/news-media/news/english-news/article/1801/new-wcc-central-committee.html>