

ADDRESS
OF THE GRAND CHANCELLOR THEODOROS
ON THOMAS SUNDAY
CHURCH OF ST. PARASKEVI, HASKÖY
ROMANIAN COMMUNITY IN ISTANBUL
1 MAY 2022

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Dearest Father Sergiu,
Mr. Bogdan Pacurar, Consul of Romania in Istanbul,
Beloved parishioners of the Church of St. Paraskevi,
Romanian-speaking Orthodox sons and daughters of the Martyric Church
of Constantinople,

Hristos a inviat!

Conveying to you all the Patriarchal blessings and paternal Paschal wishes of His All-Holiness, our Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, it is a special honor to address you today, having concluded Bright Week, in which we lived and experienced the Paschal joy of our Risen Savior.....

Inspired by St. Thomas's unwavering faith and love, I must now commend you, and especially your worthy and exemplary priest, Father Sergiu Vlad, for all the achievements you have accomplished together in this parish. I also congratulate you for your continued dedication to our venerable Master and Chief Shepherd, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, and to the Holy Great Church of Christ in whose maternal and sacrificial embrace we all find refuge, regardless of ethnic origin. As illustrated by your community, we note that our Ecumenical Patriarchate ensures the pastoral care for all the Orthodox faithful in this City and throughout this country by providing holy temples and dedicated priests to the Romanian, Greek, Bulgarian, Georgian, Russian, Ukrainian-speaking believers

and others, avoiding ethnophyletistic tendencies and ensuring the unity of Orthodox Christians here under the spiritual leadership and the canonical protection of one bishop, namely the Archbishop of Constantinople.

Relatedly, we all have cause to show our appreciation and gratitude to the First-Throne Church of Orthodoxy, for it was Constantinople who first missionized the neighboring nations of the Balkans, who granted autocephaly to all National Churches – including Romania, in 1885 – who steered the vessel of the Orthodox through the tumultuous and disturbing waters of heresies, famines, civil wars, and foreign occupations, and who is even now constantly interceding on behalf of all those in affliction, for the unity of all, and for God’s sacred creation.

The ancestral ties between Constantinople and Romania are especially strong, not only considering the granting of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in Romania in 1885, but even more recent events, such as His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew’s numerous trips to Romania, including the consecration of the Romanian People’s Salvation Cathedral on Sunday, 25 November 2018, and the greatly beneficial participation and support of His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel of Romania – a prominent theologian – in the Holy and Great Council, which was held in Crete in 2016.

Such bonds are especially necessitous throughout these days, as the Orthodox and global community is torn apart not by theological differences, but by political interests, which strike at the very heart of God’s commandment that “you love one another, as I have loved you.” (John 13:34) As faithful children of the Ecumenical Throne, let us join in prayer with His All-Holiness for the peace of the whole world, for the immediate ending of the war in Ukraine, the safety of our brothers and sisters who are in harm’s way, the repentance of the perpetrators and aggressors, and that the virtue of peace be granted to all humankind.

Before concluding, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to His Eminence Metropolitan Stefanos of Kallioupolis, Hierarchical Administrator of this Community, for his kind invitation extended to me to celebrate Divine Liturgy here today, and to congratulate the Community Council for the marvellous work done here in Hasköy, where the Grand Protopresbyter of the Ecumenical Throne, fr. George Tsetsis, originates from, and for your kind hospitality.

Pace tutoror!

Hristos a inuiat!