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Aspects Regarding Ecumenical and Christian Relations of the Greek Catholic Clergy from the Eparchy of Oradea in the Twentieth Century

Abstract.

Based on a specialized bibliography, the present study highlights – both theologically and historically – some important moments of fraternity and communion, of a real ecumenism, between Christians of different confessions in the territory of Transylvania and Partium both during the Second Vienna Arbitration of Hungary (1940–1944) and, especially, during the period of communist Romania. Special attention is paid to the Greek Catholic clergy and their actions, namely the publication – with the consent of the Holy Apostolic See of Rome – of the First Ecumenical Prayer, the ecumenical funeral service for the victims of the June 1944 bombing in Oradea, and Bishop Iuliu Hirţea’s practice of ecumenism in prison. The first part of the work discusses the most important document of the Magisterium of the Catholic Church that addresses ecumenism, specifically parts of the text of the Second Vatican Council that define the concept of ecclesiastical unity and introduce the reader to the depth of the ecumenical message of the text. Thus, important theological themes

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in the theology of ecumenism are discussed such as: the perfection of communion, regret, the desire for union, respect, brotherly love, ecumenical work, Christian values, common heritage, the life of others, the shedding of blood. The second part briefly exemplifies the presence of the two Romanian church leaders (Greek Catholic and Orthodox) at the official visit of Regent Miklós Horthy to Cluj in September 1940. The printing of a special prayer to be read by the priest before the faithful during the week of Christian unity in 1942 represents an important step taken by the Greek Catholics – of course, with the approval of Rome – on the difficult path of reconciliation between Christians. The text continues with concrete aspects of Christian solidarity during the war and communist persecution, letting history – both from the archival documents and from the memoirs of the time – speak. A young Orthodox believer, Cornel Onaca, spoke about the real ecumenism of Greek Catholic priests, who, in addition to learning and assisting in their prayers, praised the gestures of Christian charity they made in helping all those in need – about an exemplary priest and about his “holy courage”, namely about Bishop Iuliu Hirțea, Matei Boilă, who was incarcerated together with the bishop of Oradea in Jilava Prison. Focused on the period after 1990, the study presents very briefly the ecumenical meetings of the Week for Christian Unity held at the Greek Catholic parishes of Oradea, as well as the ecumenical celebration of the blessing of the waters (on the *Crișul Repede* River) by Bishop Virgil Bercea and the Orthodox Bishop Sofronie Drincec.

Keywords: Greek Catholic, ecumenical prayers, solidarity, communism, memoirs, holy courage

An important document for Catholic Christians seeking to restore church unity by promoting ecumenism is the Second Vatican Council’s *Unitatis Redintegratio (On Ecumenism)*.² Conceived in 1964, it can serve as a guide to the past actions of members of a local Catholic church in relation to the other Christian denominations. This guide can provide important elements in ecumenical dialogue precisely so that Christians of different confessions can reach the common goal, that is, Christian unity.

² Conciliul Vatican al II-lea. Constituții, decrete, declarații. Revised edition. Bucharest, Editura Arhiepiscopiei romano-catolic de București. 2000. 135–150.

In recent times more than ever before, He has been rousing divided Christians to remorse over their divisions and to a longing for unity³ [...] Jesus Christ wants His People to grow and perfects their communion in unity: in the confession of the same faith, in the common celebration of divine worship and in the fraternal harmony of the Family of God.⁴ [...] and the Catholic Church embraces them with respect and brotherly love.⁵ [...] The Council urges all the Catholic faithful, recognizing the signs of the times, to take an active part in ecumenical work.⁶ [...] Catholics must recognize and joyfully appreciate the truly Christian values, springing from the common patrimony, which are found in our separated brothers and sisters. It is worthy and just to recognize the riches of Christ and the works of His power in the lives of others, who bear witness to Christ, sometimes to the point of shedding blood: God is always wonderful and worthy of admiration in His works.⁷

In the light of this important document of Catholic theology emanating from the Second Vatican Council, we revisit the history of the Greek Catholic Church in the *Partium* area that had Christian and ecumenical implications in the twentieth century. Specifically, the present work is an examination of the positive aspects of the Christian charity demonstrated by Greek Catholic priests in their interactions with members of other Christian denominations with whom they coexisted.

The years of the Second World War weighed heavily on the shoulders of Europe whose map was forcibly redrawn by dictators. Following the Second Vienna Arbitration of 30 August 1940, the ecclesiastical territory of the Romanian Greek Catholic Metropolitan Province was divided into two. In the territory ceded by Romania to Hungary, three episcopal residences remained: Oradea, Cluj-Gherla, and Baia Mare, with most of their parishes. The moment of the Hungarian troops' entry into Northern Transylvania was received with enthusiasm by the Hungarian population. On the other hand, the vast

³ Op. cit. 135. See:
https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html. [All translations of originally non-English texts/quotations are mine throughout the article unless otherwise stated.].

⁴ Op. cit. 137.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Op. cit. 137–139.

⁷ Op. cit. 137, 140.

majority of the Romanian population withdrew to their homes, the role of the official reception of the new Hungarian administration being taken over by the church leaders. It was a moment of Christian unity between the Orthodox and Greek Catholic Romanians in Cluj when Blessed Iuliu Hossu sat next to Nicolae Colan and greeted Regent Miklós Horthy. Both stressed that they would be good citizens in the new homeland, asking God's blessing on the rulers.⁸

The ecclesiastical life of the Romanian Greek Catholics continued in the territory of Hungary, with difficulties but also with extraordinary moments of Christian fraternity. A proof of the ecumenical spirit of the Greek Catholic clergy of Oradea is given by the printing in a book of a religious service (prayers) dedicated to the week of Christian unity. This search for unity was conducted in accordance with the doctrine of the Catholic Church at the time, aiming at unity with the Holy Father of all those separated, first of the apostolic (Orthodox) sister churches and then of the others. As proof, there is an article entitled *Let All Be One* from the newspaper *Tribuna Ardealului* no. 392 of 23 January 1942, where Canon Dr Ioan Georgescu is mentioned,⁹ who took care of the

⁸ ABLONCZY, Balázs (2011): *A visszatért Erdély 1940–1944*. Budapest, Jaffa Kiadó. 56.

⁹ Ioan Georgescu – Greek Catholic canon and professor of theology (1889–1969). He was born in Scorei (Sibiu County) and studied theology in Oradea, Budapest, and Vienna (1908–1913). He worked as a professor of religion in Beiuș and Oradea and then as a professor of theology at the Seminary of Blaj. After the Union of 1918, he was employed as a teacher in Constanța and then as Deputy General Director at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Bucharest. He was ordained a celibate priest in 1931. In 1932, he was promoted to the rank of canon, and in 1934 he was appointed professor at the Greek Catholic Theological Academy in Oradea. He was national director of the Missionary Union of the Greek Catholic Clergy and after 1945 President of ARLUS (Romanian Association for the Improvement of Relations with the U.S.S.R.). After the prohibition of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church, he may have been recruited as an informant, producing several intelligence notes under the pseudonym “Vespasian” in Oradea. Later he went to Sibiu, where he had a nephew, being employed as a Russian language teacher. The communist regime imprisoned him between 1960 and 1964. He died in November 1969. (See SANA, Silviu – CIORBA, Tiberiu Alexandru – OSTAHE, Traian (2022): *Seminarul Tinerimii Române Unite II. Studenți teologi (1792–1948)*. Cluj-Napoca, Mega. 160; SANA, Silviu (2014): *Rezistentul. Episcopul dr. Iuliu Hirțea în dosarele Securității (1945–1979)*. Oradea, Editura Universității din Oradea. 41–42).

publication of the prayer.¹⁰ In the opening words of the article, it was mentioned that the organization of these prayers for Christian unity was done by order of the Holy Congregation of the Eastern Churches. Cardinal Eugen Tisserant's appeal was addressed to all Catholic dioceses and called for the spread of "more and more ... of the custom known as the Octave of Prayers for Christian Unity".¹¹ The text of the prayer, published in the columns of the newspaper, is different from the one in the book¹² and has a missionary character directed especially at the Orthodox, because it uses formulas "Lord, have mercy on us!" and "Spirit" instead of the new formulas. But there two phrases that show the openness to a real ecumenism: "That the seed of hatred, strife, anger, and division of Christians and of all men may disappear, let us pray to the Lord"; "The achievement of the union of all overall differences of language, blood, and law, let us ask of the Lord!"¹³

Funeral Service for the Victims of the Bombing of Oradea on 2 June 1944

A moment of fraternal Christian communion attended by the Greek Catholic clergy was the funeral service of the 84 victims of the American bombing of Oradea on 2 June 1944. The religious service took place on Monday, 5 June 1944, at 3:30 p.m. in Rulikovsky Cemetery and was opened by Dr István Fiedler, the Roman Catholic bishop who consecrated the coffins of the deceased.¹⁴ This was followed by a sermon delivered by Reformed Dean Béla Csernák. After the Reformed church service, Sándor Thurmezey, dean of the Evangelical Church, spoke. On behalf of the Greek Catholic Church, Petru Iluțiu¹⁵ delivered a sermon and officiated the funeral service. Vasile Popovici, an Orthodox

¹⁰ This prayer was taken from the *Yearbook of the Missionary Union of the United Romanian Clergy*. See *Anuarul Uniunii Misionare a Clerului Român Unit pe anul 1941*. Nagyvárad, Editura U.M.C. – „Patria” nyomda. 180–182.

¹¹ Ca toți să fie una. In: *Tribuna Ardealului*. 392(23 January 1942). 3.

¹² The text of the prayer in the book has in parentheses the Greek Catholic formula "Lord, have mercy on us" (see *Anuarul Uniunii Misionare...* 1942, 180–182).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Atyánkfiai vére kiált a földről. Eltemettük hősi halottainkat. In: *Nagyvárad*. 126(6 July 1944). 7.

¹⁵ Ibid. Petru Iluțiu is mentioned here as archpriest: „A református egyházi szertartás után Thurmezey Sándorevangelikus esperes, a görög katolikus egyház részéről Ilutza [sic!] esperes, míg a görögkeleti

dean, delivered a short sermon and officiated the funeral service.¹⁶ The title of the article symbolizes the moment when spiritual suffering united in prayer all representatives of the various denominations, whether they were Roman Catholics, Evangelicals, Reformed, Greek Catholics, or Orthodox: “The voice of the blood of your father’s sons cries out to Me from the earth” (Genesis 4:10).¹⁷

Christian Fraternity and Ecumenism during Communist Persecution

The abusive establishment of the communist regime in Romania led, as early as 1945, to the elimination of all those who did not agree with the communist doctrine, whether they were political or religious. Those who did not submit to Moscow’s satellite regime would be persecuted and eliminated. In particular, those with ties to the West were to be the first to fall victim to the atheist communist regime. At that time, the Catholic churches (Greek Catholic and Roman Catholic) would be subjected to a systematic attack by communist propaganda, these actions culminating in the prohibition of the Greek Catholic Church in Romania by Decree 358 of 1 December 1948. Bishops, priests, and believers were to be imprisoned for their Christian faith. But this belief of theirs would bear fruit in prison, especially among inmates who had been imprisoned for their political or religious beliefs. There, in the cold prison, suffering united everyone, regardless of denomination, as Scripture speaks: “By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities” (Isaiah 53: 11).¹⁸ “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise” (James 5: 13).

egyház részéről *Popoviciu Vazul* esperes mondottak búcsúbeszédeteket es végezték el a temetési szertartást.” According to the biographical file, between 1940 and 1948, he was a professor at the Greek Catholic Theological Seminary in Oradea (See SANA – CIORBA – OSTAHE 2022, 179).

¹⁶ Atyánkfiai vére kiált a földről. Eltemettük hősi halottainkat. In: *Nagyvárad*. 126(6 July 1944). 7.

¹⁷ The Romanian translation differs from the Hungarian/Latin version and is as follows: “The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the earth” (see *Biblia sau Sfânta Scriptură*. Bucharest, Editura de Misiune a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. 2001. 14).

¹⁸ Herein the Catholic version of the Bible in English is used. Available at: <https://mycatholic.life/bible/rsvce/> (last accessed on: 16.09.2025).

A Young Orthodox Man from Oradea Praying with Greek Catholic Priests

Noteworthy is the testimony of a lay Orthodox believer from Oradea about the ecumenical spirit of the Romanian Greek Catholic clergy and of an imprisoned Hungarian Roman Catholic theological student. Cornel Onaca was imprisoned by the communists for refusing to become a secret agent for *Securitate* and was allegedly portrayed as part of an anti-communist resistance group. In his memoirs, *Witnesses and Martyrs in Communist Prisons*, he mentioned two moments when he met with the Greek Catholic priests from Oradea. At the same time, he also mentions the moment of Christian fraternity when he stayed in a cell with a Hungarian Roman Catholic theologian. As a young man, these encounters influenced his Christian and human creed: the first was during his years of refuge (1940–1945) in Timișoara, when he met the priest and professor Paul Voștinariu. In this regard, he mentioned the following:

“The good results obtained at school brought me to the attention of the teachers, but especially of those who, like me, were in refuge in Timișoara. One of them was Professor Paul Voștinariu, the former Director of the ‘Oltea Doamna’ Girls’ High School in Oradea, who exerted a positive influence on me, on my intellectual and spiritual training, painstakingly insisting on the content of the conceptions and feelings of the frail human being that I was.”¹⁹

The second moment is related to the period when he was in prison, where he met the priest-professors of the Greek Catholic Seminary in Oradea. This is what he confessed about them:

There was also a group of Greek Catholic priests recently convicted by the Oradea Military Tribunal. The group of Greek Catholic priests consisted of Bishop Iuliu Hirțea, Gavril Stan, Augustin Olah, Vasile Hossu, Vasile Andercău, Virgil Maxim, and others. Through the mixing and rotation of the detainees that was carried out periodically, we had the chance to be together for various periods of time. Living with these great personalities has changed my convictions and the way I perceive the role and purpose of life, as well as the one after our passage to another world, without worries, troubles, and needs. These personalities decisively strengthened my belief in the existence of God, whom I glorified

¹⁹ ONACA, Cornel (2014): *Martori și martiri din temnițele comuniste*. Oradea, Primus. 24.

in our prayers, day after day and night after night. The rosary was also the prayer that we recited almost continuously, through its mysteries, convinced of the help and of the fulfilment of our petitions, of the many afflicted. After a while, the cell rotations were resumed, parting with regret from those wonderful people, with whom had I lived part of my life in another world, beneficial, above the ordinary one.²⁰

The third moment of Christian communion, experienced in prison by the young Cornel Onaca, was with the young Hungarian Roman Catholic, who was a theology student. Although neither knew the other's language, prayers in Latin united them, thus celebrating moments of Christian fraternal communion.

After several months of continued solitude, a young Hungarian man was brought to my cell, whose name I no longer remember, a theology student, being of the Roman Catholic religion, from Harghita or Covasna County. [...] I didn't stay for too long with that young theologian, with whom I had a good time, because his case was "closed", and he was probably sent to trial. I never met him again. Where is he? Is he still alive? Has he been liquidated? From him we learned and prayed together prayers in Latin, and especially the rosary, encouraging each other and placing great hopes in the future.²¹

Bishop Iuliu Hirțea and Community Prayers in Prison

Among the testimonies of Christian solidarity and ecumenism in communist prisons, in which Greek Catholic clergy were involved, an important place is occupied by those of Dr Iuliu Hirțea, the Auxiliary Bishop of Oradea. He was falsely convicted of the "crime of high treason", more specifically because he remained faithful to the Greek Catholic confession and coordinated the pastoral activities of the clergy and the faithful who, despite coercion, did not convert to Orthodoxy. He was imprisoned for 12 years in the prisons of Oradea, Târgu Ocna, Jilava, Pitești, Dej, and Gherla. The memory of him calls to mind the luminous figure of a true priest and bishop.²² Those who knew

²⁰ Op. cit. 178–179.

²¹ Op. cit. 71–72.

²² ANDERCĂU, Vasile (1996): Condamnat de ziua mamei mele împreună cu Episcopul Iuliu Hirțea și Episcopul Vasile Hossu. In: *Vestitorul*. 37(27 June). 8.

him in prison were impressed by his qualities, but especially by the fact that he knew how to live his priestly ministry to the full, despite all the persecutions. Many of them became practitioners again, and some confessed to him that they wanted to join the Greek Catholic confession in the future.²³ In particular, during his imprisonment, some intelligence reports document his pastoral activities – liturgical services, prayers, sermons, discussions – carried out for the benefit of fellow prisoners.²⁴

On 5 April 1958, while he was imprisoned in Jilava, the following is mentioned about his pastoral activity:

“In the evening, in bed, Hirțea Iuliu administered Holy Communion to Boilă Matei, and Sunday they continued the religious service with the help of the choir made up of Cocortoi Cornel, Andreescu Victor, Baumen Emil, and Cercel. These religious services – with the respective sermons – delivered by Hirțea Iuliu continue regularly every Sunday and on religious holidays.”²⁵

On 5 April 1958, also in Jilava Prison, Bishop Hirțea is surprised by the arrival of a secret agent while praying as a priest with all the prisoners around him:

In rooms 30–33, the religious service continues to be performed by the detainee, former priest Hirțea Iuliu, with the modified choir, namely: Bauman Emil, Andreevici Victor, Petrescu Eftimie, and Birzeanu Ion. The *Creed* and the rest of the prayers are recited by Cercel Dumitru and Ivănescu Petre. The so-called *Rosary* (evening prayer) is also continued, in which the following take part regularly: Bauman Emil, Petre, or Eftimie, Ivănescu Petre, Kilian Iosif and Kilter, Popescu Constantin, Băjenaru George, Cercel Dumitru, and Birzeanu Ion.

Also, every Saturday, the sermons delivered by the priest Hirțea Iuliu take place. He continues to take communion daily in the morning with all the above. Preparations are currently being made for the Easter holidays.²⁶

But perhaps the most beautiful testimony about the Christian fraternity and the ecumenical spirit of Bishop Iuliu Hirțea towards his fellow prisoners is the one given by Matei Boilă.

²³ SANA 2014, 20.

²⁴ Op. cit. 76–78, 241–242, 246–247, 249–250.

²⁵ Op. cit. 241.

²⁶ Op. cit. 242–243.

He was imprisoned because he was a member of the youth organization of the National Peasant Party.²⁷

I met him as a truly holy man in the prison of Jilava in 1957 [...]. I want to tell you how I spent Easter in 1957, because it is highly significant for Hirțea's personality and holiness [...]. The priest was very shy, cautious, and fearful in a certain way. That is why his great heroism lay in his holy courage. The courage that overcomes natural tendencies, the courage that overcomes everything and brings you closer Christ [...]. And he overcame both his fear and the thought that he might be caught [...]. And every day, in the evening, he delivered us a sermon. In turn, we carried out apostolic work and evangelization among the others and gathered them together. Anyone who wished to come came to Cell 9, where he climbed up onto the upper bunk. And there were 100 people gathered, standing crowded side by side. And he would preach to us. He preached very beautifully and with great feeling, overcoming his fear and all these things [...]. There were 252²⁸ people from all walks of life. When Easter was approaching, I said to him: "Monsignor, shall we have a Liturgy at Easter?" so that he would have the opportunity to do so, as he had received some wine and bread clandestinely.

And 2-3 days beforehand, we started preparing for Easter. Those who wished could go to confession and then receive Holy Communion on the holy feasts. And then, at the price of the sacrifice he offered, [...] a miracle happened. Which would never have happened outside.

²⁷ SANA, Silviu (2013): *Doi mărturisitori – Părintele Matei Boilă și Episcopul Iuliu Hirțea*. In: *Vestitorul* 8(27 February). 12–13.

²⁸ In another declaration Fr. M. Boilă talk about 240 persons: "I stayed in the Jilava prison, together with Monsignor Hirțea from Oradea. And I can tell you that I had a great satisfaction there, then, that I was in cells 9-12 [...] where there were 240 people crammed into some rooms. Think of 240 people, young people, old people, university professors, former ministers, leading philosophers, workers, peasants, absolutely everyone, Orthodox, Catholics, Reformed, of all categories. An extraordinary heterogeneity. And it was Easter 1957. And Monsignor Hirțea was a particularly shy man, a bit fearful; I shouldn't say fearful, but that's how he was. However, he had wine and bread and everything he needed for the Divine Liturgy. He made 42 sermons during the Easter fast. Every day he preached and gathered people around him [...]. Out of the 242 people, 240 confessed and received Holy Communion. This is quite something! Just, really in an ecumenical spirit, you know. That was the case then. It was something very impressive!" (See SASU, Aurora [Year missing]: *Fragment dintr-un interviu cu părintele Matei Boilă*. *Arhiva de Istorie Orală a Memorialului Sighet, Fond Aurora Sasu, interviul nr. 1277*. <https://www.memorialsighet.ro/matei-boil/> (last accessed on: 16.09.2025).

Out of 252 people, from all walks of life, 250 confessed [...]. At that time, he was the only priest there. 250 people confessed and received Holy Communion. Extraordinary! [...] I must tell you I have never felt so much joy as I did at that Easter. Nothing can compare to the joy I felt at that moment. I really wondered: Where did this great joy come from? Because I realized then that the 252 people are bound together through Jesus Christ. An extraordinary thing! To have people of all kinds and from all walks of life bound together by the love of Christ. It was a feeling of joy and extraordinary uplifting. I have never experienced such a celebration with such joy as then. This is what he did through the sacrifice he made, through devotion and holy courage. Because he defeated his timid and prudent nature [...].

It was something for us, an extraordinary joy. Many would tell me: "You were in prison, and you suffered." "Yes, I suffered, but we lived there with a joy you did not know outside."²⁹

After 1990. The Dawn of Freedom and Openness to the West

From a pastoral perspective, the freedom enjoyed by the Greek Catholic Church in the years after the "revolution" of 1989 opened new paths for spreading the Gospel and living out the Christian message in Romania. Every year, the Greek Catholic parishes of Oradea were the "host" of ecumenical meetings in the "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" set in January on the calendar. Groups of believers and young people of different confessions participated there: Orthodox, Reformed, Baptists, Roman Catholics, who prayed together for the unity of the church. In recent years, during the same week of prayer for Christian unity, each denomination has hosted a prayer service and a teaching session with Christian brothers from the other confessions.³⁰

Regarding relations with the Romanian Orthodox Church, profoundly ecumenical moments were few but significant – particularly the blessing of the waters (of the Crișul Repede River), a joint celebration led by the Greek Catholic Bishop Virgil Bercea and the Orthodox Bishop Sofronie Drincec from Oradea, moments praised by the faithful of both churches but later condemned by the Synod of the Orthodox Church.³¹

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ *Săptămâna de rugăciune pentru unitatea creștinilor 2025 „Crezi tu aceasta?” (In, 11: 26).* <https://www.egco.ro/2025/01/17/comunicat-13/> (15 September 2025).

³¹ CHIRILĂ, Mircea (2013): *Ps Virgil Bercea, episcopul Oradiei. „Creștinismul e unul singur. Noi, oamenii, I-am sfâșiat!”*. <https://www.ebihoreanul.ro/stiri/ps-virgil-bercea-episcopul-greco-catolic->

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The opening of the Greek Catholic Church in Romania to ecumenism was made under the guidance of Rome even before the outbreak of the Second World War. The prayer adapted to the Eastern rite, published in 1942 in Oradea, was – in addition to the old formula consecrated in the Divine Liturgy “for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord” – an important step for the rapprochement between Greek Catholics and the other Christian brothers. But beyond words, that is, theological documents, it was the deeds that indicated the level of Christian charity and, implicitly, of real ecumenism. This is how we have the funeral of the deceased and the communion in prayer of the Roman Catholic, Reformed, Evangelical, Greek Catholic and Orthodox clergy for the victims of the American bombing of Oradea on 2 June 1944. But the most catalytic factor of unity among Christians was the communist period, during which members of all Christian denominations were suffering together. This experience was lived jointly in the prisons of the Romanian gulag, with Christians of different confessions approaching each other in prayer in order to survive the physical and psychological terror inflicted on them. In this climate, the Greek Catholic clergy acted out of their Christian vocation to spiritually assist the detainees, an example being Bishop Iuliu Hirțea of Oradea.

The Greek Catholic Church’s ecumenical relations in the 20th and 21st centuries are best summed up as “continuity in diversity and unity”. Both before and after the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), the Greek Catholic Church followed Rome’s canonical indications in ecumenical dialogue, directions which – for the 20th century – signalled openness to the search for ecclesiastical unity among all Christians. In concrete terms, the personal encounters of Greek Catholic clergy with Christians of other confessions have fostered and continue to sustain genuine ecumenical relations. After the fall of communism, two main characteristics of the ecumenism practised by the Greek Catholic Church in Romania can be observed: that of normality, that is, of the continuity established by the documents of the 2nd Vatican Council – the search for common points of Christian life with all Christian confessions –, and that of tense relations with the Romanian Orthodox Church, especially on the subject of restitution of properties abusively confiscated by the communist regime. Looking ahead, the Greek Catholic Church, faithful to the

al-oradie-crestinismul-este-unul-singur-noi-oamenii-l-am-sfasiat--105714.html (last accessed on: 27 February 2026).

unifying message of the Sacred Scripture, remains open to continuing the ecumenical dialogue, on different themes and levels, with all Christian confessions within the country as well as abroad.

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