

Prayer and Solidarity in Times of Crisis*

We joyfully greet all participants of the 18th General Assembly of *The Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe*, on the topic "Migration in times of economic crisis – policies, the rights of migrants and the role of the Churches", organized in cooperation with The Romanian Ecumenical Association of Churches – AIDRom and hosted today in the *Conventus* Hall of the Palace of the Romanian Patriarchate.

If today many people suffer because of the economic and financial crisis, this is mainly caused by the greed for fast profit, by unfair earnings, financial speculation, tax evasion worldwide. But the Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers of the Church reveal to us that the hunt for material profit at any price, without measure or morals, divides the world between rich and poor, creates injustice and violence, lack of security and migration. In this regard, the Savior's words: „I was a stranger and you took Me in (...); Inasmuch as you did it to one of these My brothers, you did it to Me" (Matthew 25, 35 and 40) encourage us to manifest solidarity towards the strangers and the poor.

Europe becomes more and more a continent of immigration. Nowadays, because of the deepening of the gap between rich and poor, we witness a **self-imposed exile of labour force** and dramatic changes for many families.

* The address of His Beatitude Father Daniel, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox, for the participants of the XVIIIth General Assembly of *The Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe*, on the topic "Migration in times of economic crisis – policies, the rights of migrants and the role of the Churches", Palace of the Patriarchate, Friday, 17th June 2011.

The negative consequences of economic crisis for the immigrants are hard to bear, because poverty breeds suffering and insecurity, bewilderment and despair. **Under these circumstances of economic crisis we must multiply prayer as a source of hope and organize solidarity with those less favoured and marginalized.**

The Romanian Patriarchate makes efforts to keep links to the Romanian emigrants, it organizes new parishes to preserve their spiritual and cultural identity in a pluralistic or religious secular context, but also to enter dialogue with the society that hosts them. In this regard, **the Romanian Orthodox communities abroad are encouraged to foster pastoral, social and ecumenical cooperation with the main churches of those countries.**

In 2009, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church decided that every year, the first Sunday after the feast of the *Dormition of the Mother of God* (15th August) shall be dedicated to the **Romanian emigrants**, as a moment of common prayer, pastoral dialogue and brotherly fellowship.

Even though the financial crisis can be seen by many as a harsh judgement for too much greed for material goods and waste of money, it has to be used by Christian Churches as **the call for a new beginning in the lives of persons and nations. Even if we become poorer from the point of view of material goods, let us not become poor from a spiritual point of view, but rich by actions of solidarity towards those poorer than we are.**

We pray to the Saviour Jesus Christ to bless all those present in this General Assembly of *The Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe*, which fosters dialogue and cooperation with the goal of the integration of foreigners in our societies.

Let us bring together intense hope with efficient solidarity in order to give a proper response to the problem of migration nowadays.

† DANIEL
Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church