



HOLY TRINITY

ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



723 N BODINE ST PHILADELPHIA, PA 19123

CHURCH BULLETIN

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Sunday of Orthodoxy

Gospel Reading John 1: 43– 51

At that time, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.' Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.' When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, 'Here is truly an Israelite in whom there

is no deceit!' Nathanael asked him, 'Where did you come to know me?' Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.' Nathanael replied, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered, 'Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.' And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

Apostle Reading Hebrews 11: 24 - 40

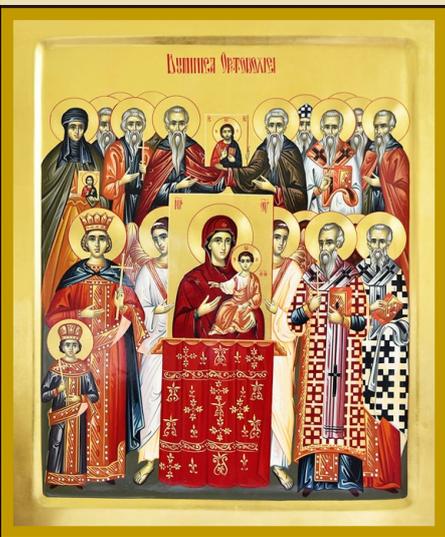
Brethren, by faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered abuse suffered for the Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the reward. And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented — of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, without us, be made perfect.

Synaxarion Sunday March 8, 2020 (Orthodoxy Sunday - first Sunday of the Great Lent): Holy Hierarch Theophylactus the Confessor, Bishop of Nicomedia

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Meditation on the Sunday of Orthodoxy

Most Reverend
Fathers, Beloved
Brothers and Sisters in
Christ,

The Orthodox Church has dedicated the first Sunday of the Fast of Holy Pascha to the victory of the Orthodox Faith over heresies. This Sunday is called *The Sunday of Orthodoxy*, and we are all invited to reflect upon and deepen our understanding of this word, *Orthodoxy*.

According to the translation from Greek, the word *orthodoxy* means *right faith* or *right worship* of God. This means that this word speaks of the way we confess our faith about God, but also of the way we glorify God. Orthodoxy means *to believe rightly*, not in something but in Someone, in Christ as the true God revealed to the world; and it means *right worship*, not of something abstract, but of the God Who exists in Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

However, the Orthodox Church does not only possess the true teaching about Christ, but it has Christ Himself as Head of the Church, who gives Himself to all its members, the Faithful. The knowledge of the truth is thus life, and not simply an intellectual act. The Savior Himself says it in His High-Priestly Prayer, “*And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent*” (John 17:3). Thus, life as knowledge of the truth is fulfilled in the personal relationship between the believer and the Fountain of Truth, Christ, through prayer. From its beginning the Church has expressed this truth: the law of faith (*lex credendi*) finds its most perfect expression in the law of prayer (*lex orandi*). Orthodoxy is the truth faith which is most fully



expressed in true prayer. Prayer is the voice of the person who seeks God, the voice which comes out of the depths of our being when we seek the One who can reveal to us the purpose of this life. Prayer is a giving of ourselves to God, which is evident in the communal prayer which culminates in the Divine Liturgy. In the Divine Liturgy we bring ourselves and we ask for Christ, who can change our nature in accordance

with His image, the true image of God. Through prayer and through communion with the Body and Blood of the Lord, our fractured being receives the power to be put back together and soothed. In prayer, the mind is united with the heart and the entire being finds again its original unity with God and with the world.

There could be no more appropriate thought that I could bring to our priests and believers on this Sunday of Orthodoxy than that we *believe rightly* and verify our faith through *right* prayer. And to this thought I add another: let us go through the Lenten season with this right prayer, which will bring us the peace of Christ during this period of preparation for the Feast of the Lord's Resurrection.

† **Metropolitan Nicolae**

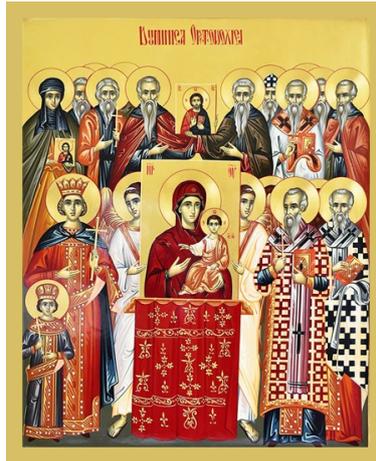


Sunday of Orthodoxy

Rejoicing today in the triumph of Orthodoxy on this first Sunday of Lent, we joyfully commemorate three events: one event belonging to the past; one event to the present; and one event which still belongs to the future.

Whenever we have any feast or joy in the Church, we Orthodox first of all look back — for in our present life we depend on what happened in the past. We depend first of all, of course, on the first and the ultimate triumph — that of Christ Himself. Our faith is rooted in that strange defeat which became the most glorious victory — the defeat of a man nailed to the cross, who rose again from the dead, who is the Lord and the Master of the world. This is the first triumph of Orthodoxy. This is the content of all our commemorations and of all our joy. This man selected and chose twelve men, gave them power to preach about that defeat and that victory, and sent them to the whole world saying preach and baptize, build up the Church, announce the Kingdom of God. And you know, my brothers and sisters, how those twelve men — very simple men indeed, simple fishermen — went out and preached. The world hated them, the Roman Empire persecuted them, and they were covered with blood. But that blood was another victory. The Church grew, the Church covered the universe with the true faith. After 300 years of the most unequal conflict between the powerful Roman Empire and the powerless Christian Church, the Roman Empire accepted Christ as Lord and Master. That was the second triumph of Orthodoxy. The Roman Empire recognized the one whom it crucified and those whom it persecuted as the bearers of truth, and their teaching as the teaching of life eternal. The Church triumphed. But then the second period of troubles began.

The following centuries saw many attempts to distort the faith, to adjust it to human needs, to fill it with human content. In each generation there were those who could not accept that message of the cross and resurrection and life eternal. They tried to change it, and those changes we call heresies. Again there were persecutions. Again, Orthodox bishops, monks and laymen defended their faith and were condemned and went into exile and were covered with blood. And after five centuries of those conflicts and persecutions and discussions, the day came which we commemorate today, the day of the final victory of Orthodoxy as the true faith over all the heresies. It happened on the first Sunday of Lent in the



year 843 in Constantinople. After almost 100 years of persecution directed against the worship of the holy icons, the Church finally proclaimed that the truth had been defined, that the truth was fully in the possession of the Church. And since then all Orthodox people, wherever they live, have gathered on this Sunday to proclaim before the world their faith in that truth, their belief that their Church is truly apostolic, truly Orthodox, truly universal. This is the event of the past that we commemorate today.

But let us ask ourselves one question: Do all the triumphs of Orthodoxy, all the victories, belong to the past? Looking at the present today, we sometimes feel that our only consolation is to remember the past. *Then* Orthodoxy was glorious, *then* the Orthodox Church was powerful, *then* it dominated. But what about the present? My dear friends, if the triumph of Orthodoxy belongs to the past only, if there is nothing else for us to do but commemorate, to repeat to ourselves how glorious was the past, then Orthodoxy is dead. But we are here tonight to witness to the fact that Orthodoxy not only is not dead but also that it is once more and forever celebrating its own triumph — the triumph of Orthodoxy. We don't have to fight heresies among ourselves, but we have other things that once more challenge our Orthodox faith.

Today, gathered here together, Orthodox of various national backgrounds, we proclaim and we glorify first of all our unity in Orthodoxy. This is the triumph of Orthodoxy in the present. This is a most wonderful event: that all of us, with all our differences, with all our limitations, with all our weaknesses, can come together and say we belong to that Orthodox faith, that we are one in Christ and in Orthodoxy.

We are living very far from the traditional centers of Orthodoxy. We call ourselves Eastern Orthodox, and yet we are here in the West, so far from those glorious cities which were centers of the Orthodox faith for centuries — Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Moscow. How far are those cities. And yet, don't we have the feeling that something of a miracle has happened, that God has sent us here, far into the West, not just in order to settle here, to increase our income, to build up a community. He also has sent us as apostles of Orthodoxy, so that this faith, which historically was limited to the East, now is becoming a faith which is truly and completely universal.

This is a thrilling moment in the history of Orthodoxy. That is why it is so important for us to be here tonight and to understand, to realize, to have that vision of what is going on. People were crossing the ocean, coming here, not thinking so much about their faith as about themselves, about their lives, about their future. They were usually poor people, they had a difficult life, and they built those little Orthodox churches everywhere in America not for other people but for themselves, just to remember their homes, to perpetuate their tradition. They didn't think of the future. And yet this is what happened: the Orthodox Church was sent here through and with those poor men. The truth itself, the fullness of the apostolic faith -- all this came here, and here we are now, filling this hall and proclaiming this apostolic faith — the faith that has strengthened the universe. And this leads us to the event which still belongs to the future. If today we can only proclaim, if we can only pray for that coming triumph of Orthodoxy in this country and in the world, our Orthodox faith forces us to believe that it is not by accident but by divine providence that the Orthodox faith today has reached all countries, all cities, all continents of the universe. After that historic weakness of our religion, after the persecutions by the Roman Empire, by the Turks, by the godless atheists, after all the troubles that we had to go through, today a new day begins. Something new is going to happen. And it is this future of Orthodoxy that we have to rejoice about today.

We can already have a vision of that future when, in the West, a strong American Orthodox Church comes into existence. We can see how this faith, which for such a long time was an alien faith here, will become truly and completely universal in the sense that we will answer the questions of all men, and also all their questions. For if we believe in that word: "Orthodoxy," "the true faith"; if for one moment we try to understand what it means: the true, the full Christianity, as it has been proclaimed by Christ and His disciples; if our Church has preserved for all ages the message of the apostles and of the fathers and of the saints in its purest form, then, my dear friends, here is the answer to the questions and to the problems and to the sufferings of our world. You know that our world today is so complex. It is changing all the time. And the more it changes, the more people fear, the more they are frightened by the future, the more they are pre-occupied by what will happen to them. And this is where Orthodoxy must answer their problem; this is where Orthodoxy must accept the challenge of modern civilization and reveal to men of all nations, to all men in the whole world, that it has remained the force of God left in history for the transformation, for the deification, for the transfiguration of human life. The past, the present, the

future: At the beginning, one lonely man on the cross — the complete defeat. And if at that time we had been there with all our human calculations, we probably would have said: "That's the end.

Nothing else will happen." The twelve left Him. There was no one, no one to hope. The world was in darkness. Everything seemed finished. And you know what happened three days later. Three days later He appeared. He appeared to His disciples, and their hearts were burning within them because they knew that He was the risen Lord. And since then, in every generation, there have been people with burning hearts, people who have felt that this victory of Christ had to be carried again and again into this world, to be proclaimed in order to win new human souls and to be the transforming force in history.

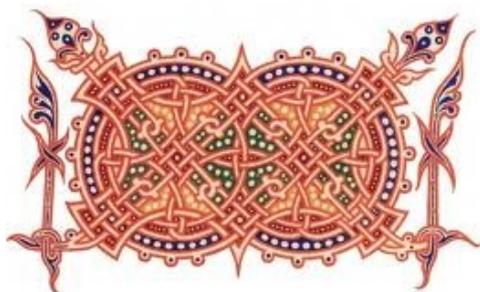
Today this responsibility belongs to us. We feel that we are weak. We feel that we are limited, we are divided, we are still separated in so many groups, we have so many obstacles to overcome. But today, on the Sunday of Orthodoxy, we close our eyes for a second and we rejoice in that unity which is already here: priests of various national churches praying together, people of all backgrounds uniting in prayer for the triumph of Orthodoxy. We are already in a triumph, and may God help us keep that triumph in our hearts, so that we never give up hope in that future event in the history of orthodoxy when Orthodoxy will become the victory which eternally overcomes all the obstacles, because that victory is the victory of Christ Himself. As we approach the most important moment of the Eucharist, the priest says, "Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess...." What is the condition of the real triumph of Orthodoxy? What is the way leading to the real, the final, the ultimate victory of our faith? The answer comes from the Gospel. The answer comes from Christ Himself and from the whole tradition of Orthodoxy. It is *love*. Let us love one another, that with one mind we may confess . . . confess our faith, our Orthodoxy. Let us, from now on, feel responsible for each other. Let us understand that even if we are divided in small parishes, in small dioceses, we first of all belong to one another. We belong together, to Christ, to His Body, to the Church. Let us feel responsible for each other, and let us love one another. Let us put above everything else the interests of Orthodoxy in this country. Let us understand that each one of us today has to be the apostle of Orthodoxy in a country which is not yet Orthodox, in a society which is asking us: "What do you believe?" "What is your faith?" And let us, above everything else, keep the memory, keep the experience, keep the taste of that unity which we are anticipating tonight.

At the end of the first century — when the Church was still a very small group, a very small minority, in a society which was definitely anti-Christian when the persecution was beginning — St. John the Divine, the beloved disciple of Christ, wrote these words: "And this is the victory, our faith, this is the victory." There was no victory at that time, and yet he knew that in his faith he had the victory that can be applied to us today. We have the promise of Christ, that the gates of hell will *never* prevail against the Church. We have the promise of Christ that if we have faith, all things are possible. We have the promise of the Holy Spirit, that He will fill all that which is weak, that He will help us at the moment when we need help. In other words, we have all the possibilities, we have everything that we need, and therefore the victory is ours. It is not a human victory which can be defined in terms of money, of human success, of human achievements. What we are preaching tonight, what we are proclaiming tonight, what we are praying for tonight, is the victory of Christ in me, in us, in all of you in the Orthodox Church in America. And that victory of Christ in us, of the one who for us was crucified and rose again from the dead, that victory will be the victory of His Church.

Today is the triumph of Orthodoxy, and a hymn sung today states solemnly and simply: "This is the Apostolic faith, this is the Orthodox faith, this is the faith of the Fathers, this is the faith that is the foundation of the world." My dear brothers and sisters, this is also our own faith. We are chosen. We are elected. We are the happy few that can say of our faith, "apostolic," "universal," "the faith of our fathers," "Orthodoxy," "the truth." Having this wonderful treasure, let us preserve it, let us keep it, and let us also use it in such a way that this treasure becomes the victory of Christ in us and in His Church. Amen.

Father Alexander Schmemmann

(Source: <https://www.schmemmann.org/byhim/orthodoxy1985.html>)



HOLY TRINITY'S Liturgical Schedule from March 7 to March 15, 2019

Saturday March 7 (St. Theodore's Saturday):

9:00 am - Matins
9:30 am - Divine Liturgy
11:00 am - Memorial Service
12:00 pm - Confession
5:00 pm - HOLY UNCTION

Sunday March 8 - Orthodoxy Sunday:

9:00 am - Matins
10:00 am - Divine Liturgy
11:00 pm - Sunday School
12:00 - Coffee hour

Wednesday March 11:

5:00 pm - Akathist

Friday March 13:

Saturday March 14 (Soul Saturday):

9:00 am - Matins
9:30 am - Divine Liturgy
11:00 am - Memorial Service
12:00 pm - Sacrament of Confession

Sunday March 15 (Sunday of St Gregory Palamas - second Sunday of the Great Lent):

9:00 am - Matins
10:00 am - Holy Liturgy
11:00 pm - Sunday School
12:00 pm - Coffee hour



On Sunday of Orthodoxy

On this day we celebrate the Triumph of Orthodoxy, the commemoration of the defeat of the heresy of iconoclasm. The word “heresy,” as we know, means “false teaching” and the false teaching that was finally vanquished was iconoclasm.

“Iconclast” comes from the Greek work that means “icon-breaker.” The

iconoclasts were those who smashed the icons because they believed that the Orthodox faithful, in venerating icons, were breaking the first commandment that says, “Thou shalt not make unto yourself any graven image.”

Of course the objection ran deeper than that. Look at it closely and you see that the false teaching – the heresy – of iconclasm taught something else too. It taught that Jesus Christ never really existed. The second person of the Trinity, the Word – capital W – of the Father never really became flesh and dwelt among us.

And that is why the Orthodox leaders fought the heresy. If the Word did not become flesh and dwell among us, then we believe a lie. Salvation does not really exist. We are deceivers who are deceived.

The iconoclasts were wrong in this way: When the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, you could make an image of Him because He existed just like you and I do – in space and time. Jesus had flesh and blood – just like you and me. He was not a phantom or just a figure in our imagination.

And that is why creating an icon of Jesus Christ is allowed. In fact, St. Paul tells us in scripture that Jesus the Son is the – and I am looking at the English here – “express image” of the Father. Look this up in the Greek and the word is *eikon* – or “icon.” We are allowed to make an icon of the *Eikon*, an image of the Image.

So, if you were around two thousand years ago and had your digital camera with you, you could have taken a picture of Jesus and His image could be printed out on paper. He wasn’t an imaginary figure. He wasn’t a concept. He was nothing less than a flesh and blood human being. And, like the faithful of old, you would venerate that image because He was also the Son of God.



This service, the one we celebrated today was first held in 842 in Constantinople. Patriarch Methodios presided and the faithful Empress Theodora was in attendance. It has been held every year on the first Sunday of Lent in every Orthodox Church every year ever since.

But there is a deeper lesson for us too. And the lesson is this: Every generation faces its own heresies – its own false teachings – that require a defense drawn from the faith.

In America we face them too although in different ways. America is a great country. It has grasped some principles about human freedom and liberty that, at their core, are Christian in their origin. But we are not an empire or a monarchy. We are not mono-cultural. We are a nation of immigrants who govern ourselves not as a tribe, but under the rule of law.

So things work differently here. We have no emperor. We have no patriarch – at least not yet. We have the public square to debate and settle our differences, and that public square is often a noisy, raucous, and sometimes unfair place.

Do you wonder why moral questions become political issues sometimes? That’s why. Do you ask yourself why people get so emotionally invested in what otherwise would be private affairs? That’s why too. Do you wish that sometimes the emotional temperature could be lowered a few degrees? I do too but usually it doesn’t happen.

And there are huge questions being debated today. Gay marriage, what constitutes a family, greed in the marketplace, our relationship to the environment, who should live and who should die – all sorts of question that portend a very different society down the road depending on how they are answered.

But here too we have to take a closer look. And if you look closely, past the immediate political posturing on the many sides of these issues, you see that they pose this common question: What does it mean to be a human being? From the Christian point of view we would sharpen that question even further: Who did God create us to be?

In theological language — and I am going to throw out a thirty-five dollar theological term here — we call this an “anthropological” question. “Anthropological” comes from the Greek work *anthropos* which means, “man.” The question behind many of the questions in our culture today is really a question about what it means to be a human being — Who did God create us to be?

From that question flow a thousand others that crystallize around a handful of secondary ones — How do I understand myself? How do I understand others? How do I relate to others? How to I relate to the physical world around me? What is my responsibility to my neighbor?

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Let me shift gears. I said earlier that this celebration — the Sunday of Orthodoxy — commemorated the restoration of icons that was really the restoration of the Orthodox faith. I also said that every generation faces the heresies — the false teachings — in its own time and way. I said too that in America, we have these great conflicts but they express themselves in a different way.

With that in mind, in America, the Sunday of Orthodox is also the time we discuss Orthodox unity — the goal of having one unified Orthodox Church in America.

I believe the time has come that if we do not have unity, Orthodoxy in America will never reach its God-given commission to bring the kind of light to this great nation that can heal it — that can answer in intelligent and compelling ways the core questions that frame so many great debates in the public square.

I also believe that the objections we hear to Orthodox unity have become largely irrelevant for this reason: your children and grandchildren are American. If Orthodox Christianity cannot reach them as Americans — which is to say that if it cannot speak to them in the cultural context that the Orthodox of old reached their children in their particular cultures — the Church will not die (it never dies), but Orthodoxy in America will retrench and fade into a cultural and religious oddity much in the same way that we think about the Amish or the Shakers.

Our children and grandchildren are American. Nothing will change that. If the Church will not incorporate the Orthodox faith into American culture, it won't have anything to say to them and they will look elsewhere for the living water. And God, being a good God who loves mankind — *phil-anthropos*, translated as “the lover or mankind” or sometimes “the friend of man” — just might

find another way to give it to them.

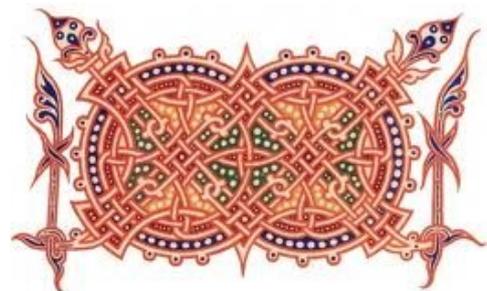
Orthodoxy has always been closely tied to culture. In fact, you can't have religion with a corresponding cultural expression of it. Put another way, religious faith enervates, vivifies, makes alive, the culture in which we live. Religion is the ground of culture. The tradition is the structure that shapes culture so that culture itself points to and references the deepest truth of all — the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

So I join my voice with those who — on this day in years past and in many churches all over America today — call for the Orthodox in America to embrace the Gospel commission to go forth unto all nations to preach and baptize. Orthodoxy, which its rich comprehension of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is coming of age in a new, young, and very vibrant country that is being prepared to hear this gospel and thereby have new life breathed into it.

We see Orthodoxy in America coming of age at the same time that America is in a deep cultural crisis. I do not believe this is a historical accident. I believe that God brought the Orthodox faith to America to speak to a nation that needs new life breathed into it at the proper time. That time is now.

And if we respond, then we are faithful to the legacy bequeathed to us that we celebrate today. Then we can stand with the assurance and resolve that we too are meeting the challenge of our generation in the same way that the Orthodox did over 1200 years ago.

Fr. Hans Iacobse
(St Peter Antiochian Orthodox Mission
Bonita Springs, FL)



2020 US Census Campaign

“Alianța”, together with the Romanian Embassy, community and church groups around the country, is supporting the US 2020 Census with an important social media campaign to encourage Romanian-Americans to mark themselves down as of Romanian-origin.

Estimates of Romanians and Americans of Romanian origin living in the US, vary from 800,000 to 1.5 million. To make sure every American of Romanian heritage knows where and how to declare their origin when completing the Census form, "Alliance" is launching this information campaign to encourage all Romanian-Americans to mark that on their Census form. An accurate count will help reveal the true number of Romanians living in the United States and will help strengthen the US/Romanian partnership by showing the role of Romanian Americans in communities from coast to coast.

Singer Paula Seling and other leading Romanian-Americans are urging the community to show their pride by writing "ROMANIAN" on question 9.

WILL YOU JOIN US?

The Campaign Plan

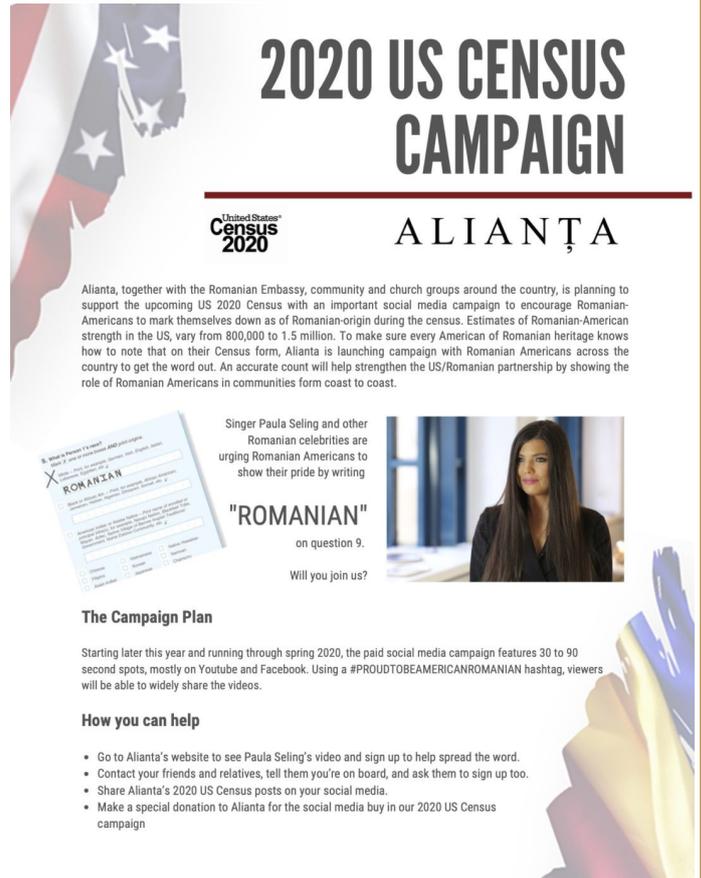
The paid social media campaign features 30 to 90 second spots, mostly on Youtube and Facebook. Using a

#PROUDTOBEAMERICANROMANIAN

hashtag, viewers will be able to widely share the videos.

How Can You Help ?

- Go to Alianța's website to see some of the videos and sign up to help spread the word.
- Contact your friends and relatives, tell them you're on board, and ask them to sign up too.
- Share Alianța's 2020 US Census posts on your



2020 US CENSUS CAMPAIGN

United States
Census 2020

ALIANȚA

Alianța, together with the Romanian Embassy, community and church groups around the country, is planning to support the upcoming US 2020 Census with an important social media campaign to encourage Romanian-Americans to mark themselves down as of Romanian-origin during the census. Estimates of Romanian-American strength in the US, vary from 800,000 to 1.5 million. To make sure every American of Romanian heritage knows how to note that on their Census form, Alianța is launching campaign with Romanian Americans across the country to get the word out. An accurate count will help strengthen the US/Romanian partnership by showing the role of Romanian Americans in communities from coast to coast.

Singer Paula Seling and other Romanian celebrities are urging Romanian Americans to show their pride by writing

"ROMANIAN"
on question 9.

Will you join us?

The Campaign Plan

Starting later this year and running through spring 2020, the paid social media campaign features 30 to 90 second spots, mostly on Youtube and Facebook. Using a #PROUDTOBEAMERICANROMANIAN hashtag, viewers will be able to widely share the videos.

How you can help

- Go to Alianța's website to see Paula Seling's video and sign up to help spread the word.
- Contact your friends and relatives, tell them you're on board, and ask them to sign up too.
- Share Alianța's 2020 US Census posts on your social media.
- Make a special donation to Alianța for the social media buy in our 2020 US Census campaign

social media.

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Editor's note:

What is "Alliance"? According to the website Alliance.org, "Alliance" is "the most important national organization in DC, dedicated to the consolidation and development of Romanian-bitter-cane relations." She "has been active since 2014 and has quickly attracted many prominent supporters." It was founded in 2014 by the former US ambassador to Bucharest, Jim Rosapepe (1998-2001), and his successor, Mark Gitenstein (2009-2012). The Board of Directors of the Alliance benefits from the support of many successful Americans, who have ties to Romania, including former US ambassadors, several US honorary consulates, as well as business people and academic personalities. Each year, the "Alliance" hosts the Gala and Summit, attended by politicians, business people and important stars from America and Romania. Former personalities who have honored these events include former US President George Bush.