



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS **GENERAL AUDIENCE** St Peter's Square

Wednesday, 5 June 2019 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Last weekend, I made an [Apostolic Journey to Romania](#), at the invitation of the President and the Prime Minister. I renew my appreciation to them and I extend it to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities and to all those who cooperated to bring about this visit. Above all I give thanks to God who allowed the Successor of Peter to return to that country, [20 years after the visit of Saint John Paul II](#).

In sum, as the motto of my journey announced, I encouraged “*journeying together*”. It was my joy to be able to do so not from afar or from above, but by walking, myself, among the Romanian people, as a pilgrim in their land.

The various events demonstrated the value and need of journeying together, both *among Christians*, at the level of faith and charity, and *among citizens*, at the level of civil commitment.

As Christians, we have the grace of living a season of fraternal relationships among the different Churches. In Romania the majority of the faithful belong to the Orthodox Church, currently led by Patriarch Daniel, to whom go my fraternal and appreciative thoughts. The Catholic community, both ‘Greek’ and ‘Latin’, is alive and active. The union among all Christians, while incomplete, is based on the one Baptism and is sealed by blood and by the suffering endured together in the dark times of the persecution, particularly in the last century under the atheist regime. There is also another Lutheran community that likewise professes faith in Jesus Christ, and has good relationships with Orthodox and Catholics.

[With the Patriarch and the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church](#), we had a very cordial meeting in which I emphasized the willingness of the Catholic Church to journey together in reconciled remembrance and toward fuller unity, which the Romanian people themselves prophetically invoked during the [visit of Saint John Paul II](#). This important ecumenical dimension of

the journey culminated in the solemn [prayer of the 'Our Father'](#), in the new, imposing Orthodox Cathedral of Bucharest. This was a moment of deep symbolic value, because the 'Our Father' is the Christian prayer par excellence, the common patrimony of all the baptized. No one can say 'my Father' and 'your Father', no: 'Our Father', the common patrimony of all the baptized. We showed that unity does not take away legitimate diversity. May the Holy Spirit lead us to live ever increasingly as children of God, and brothers and sisters among ourselves.

As a Catholic community we celebrated three Eucharistic Liturgies. [The first in the Cathedral of Bucharest, on 31 May](#), Feast of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary, icon of the Church on the journey of faith and in charity. [The second Eucharist in the Shrine of Șumuleu Ciuc](#), the destination of countless pilgrims. There, the Blessed Mother of God gathers the faithful people in the variety of languages, cultures and traditions. [And the third celebration was the Divine Liturgy in Blaj](#), the centre of the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania, with the Beatification of seven Martyred Greek-Catholic Bishops, witnesses to the freedom and mercy that come from the Gospel. One of these new Blesseds, Bishop Iuliu Hossu, wrote during imprisonment: "God has sent us into this darkness of suffering in order to offer forgiveness and to pray for the conversion of all". Considering the horrendous torture to which they were subjected, these words are a testimony to mercy.

[The meeting with young people and families, held in Iași](#) — an ancient city and important cultural centre at the crossroads of East and West — was particularly intense and festive. It is a place that invites us to *open new paths* on which to *journey together*, in the richness of diversity, in a freedom that does not sever roots but draws from them in a creative way. This encounter too had a Marian character and concluded with the entrustment of the young people and families to the Holy Mother of God.

The last stop of the journey was my [visit to the Rom community of Blaj](#). In that city the Rom people are very numerous, and for this reason I wished to greet them and renew the appeal against all forms of discrimination and for the respect of people of any ethnic group, language and religion.

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank God for this Apostolic Journey. Let us ask him, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, to bear abundant fruit for Romania and for the Church in those lands.

Special Greetings

Next Saturday, 8 June, will be the fifth anniversary of the meeting, here in the Vatican, of the Presidents of Israel and Palestine with me and Patriarch Bartholomew. At 1:00 PM we are invited to dedicate "a minute for peace" — in prayer, for believers; in reflection, for non-believers — everyone together for a more fraternal world. Thanks go to Catholic Action International, which is promoting this initiative.

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, especially those from England, Scotland, Malta, China, Japan, Malaysia, Korea, Canada and the United States of America. I offer a special greeting to the members of the United Nations Women's Guild of Rome together with my prayerful good wishes for their 50th anniversary. As we prepare to celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost, I invoke upon all of you and your families a rich outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

I offer a particular thought to *young people*, to *the elderly*, to *the sick* and to *newlyweds*. Next Sunday we will celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost. May the Lord find all of you ready to receive the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit. May the grace of his gifts instil in you new vitality of faith; may it reinvigorate hope and give operational strength to charity.