

On Monday, January 17th, 2011– a significant date for it was the vigil of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – the official launch of the new Assumptionist community in Bucharest, Romania took place. The renovated building houses a Center that seeks to be at the service of Church unity and is placed under the patronage of the two apostles, Peter, “Coryphee”, and Andrew, the First-called, emblematic figures for the Churches of the West and of the East.

The local community, made up of Fathers Lucian Dinca, Michel Kubler, Cornie Nelissen and Ovidiu Robu, welcomed a good number of Assumptionists and Oblate Sisters for the event, but also representatives of other Churches, friends and acquaintances, lay people, priests, and religious. In all, close to 130 people took part in this very successful inaugural session.



After words of welcome and a presentation of the goals of the Saint Peter-Saint Andrew Center

by Fr. Lucian, the local superior of the Assumptionist community, Mr. Teodor Baconschi, Minister of Foreign Affairs for Romania, opted to speak in French on the topic of “The Role of Christians in Today’s Europe”. Taking the Letter to Diognetes as his starting point, he showed how Christians have, more than ever, a role to play in working for the cohesion and social and moral health of the European continent. At the end of his presentation, the Minister expressed his fervent desire to support, both officially and personally, the initiatives of the Center.

Then, the Roman Catholic Metropolitan Archbishop, Ion Robu, and the Greek Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Bucharest, Mihai Fratila, blessed and anointed the magnificent icon of Saints Peter and Andrew, commissioned for the center from a famous iconographer of Bucharest. A moment of prayer – Psalm 133 (“…how sweet it is for brothers to live together in unity…”) – was followed by a number of other speeches. First, the two Bishops in attendance, who underlined the importance of religious in the context of the Church in Romania and their own interest in the project being implemented by the Assumptionist Community and the Center that they will be animating. Father Benoît Grière, Provincial of France, reiterated his own support, underlining the desire of this project to be at the service of the Church and of society, in Romania and beyond. Fr. Michel Kubler, the Director of the Center, then read a very supportive letter from the Superior General and offered a final warm word of gratitude.



Conversation followed and continued over an aperitif, served by the young students living at the Center, another dimension of the apostolate of the community. This also provided an opportunity for invited guests to visit the Center’s library, a research tool not yet entirely operational, but whose rich holdings will surely attract many scholars and students.

The media was likewise present to assure extensive coverage of the event. An article could later be found in *La Croix* and *Le Monde*, as well as on Romanian radio (RFI) and national Romania television.

A memorable day, to be sure, a promising beginning for the fruitful work of the new Saint Peter-Saint Andrew Center. Thanks be to God, and best wishes to the brothers to whom this project has been entrusted.

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