

NEGOTIATIONS FOR A UNION NEVER CONCLUDED. THE TWO DIOCESES OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX IN NORTH AMERICA

Gabriel Stelian MANEA*

Received: August 13th, 2022

Accepted for publication: October 15th, 2022

Abstract: In the first half of the 20th century, the Romanian community in the United States of America managed, after efforts that lasted several decades, to establish an Orthodox Episcopate connected to the Romanian Orthodox Church. The joy was short-lived due to the establishment of the communist regime in Romania, which also affected the spiritual life of Romanians across the Ocean. Trying to exercise control over the Romanians in the United States, the communist regime established another Episcopate, parallel to the existing one, producing a rift that is still preserved today. After the fall of the communist regime, the two dioceses of the Romanian Orthodox made mutual gestures of reconciliation and rapprochement, and from the mid-2000s they engaged in a surprising and accelerated unification process. This study traces the stages of this unification process, the content of the proposals that were made in this regard and its outcome. Also, in the conclusions, the study tries to provide some background explanations regarding the causes that led to the failure of the entire enterprise.

Keywords: Romanian Orthodox Church, Diocese of Vatra Românească, Romanian-American relations, Romanian emigration



Rezumat: În prima jumătate a secolului XX, comunitatea românească din Statele Unite ale Americii a reușit, după eforturi care au durat câteva decenii, să înființeze o Episcopie Ortodoxă legată de Biserica Ortodoxă Română. Bucuria a fost de scurtă durată din cauza instaurării regimului comunist în România, care a afectat și viața spirituală a românilor de peste Ocean. Încercând să exercite controlul asupra românilor din Statele Unite, regimul comunist a înființat o altă Episcopie, paralelă cu cea existentă, producând o ruptură care se păstrează și astăzi. După căderea regimului comunist, cele două eparhii ale ortodocșilor români au făcut gesturi reciproce de reconciliere și apropiere, iar de la mijlocul anilor 2000 s-au angajat într-un proces de unire surprinzător și accelerat. Acest studiu urmărește etapele acestui proces de unificare, conținutul propunerilor care au fost făcute în acest sens și rezultatul acestuia. De asemenea, în concluzii, studiul încearcă să ofere câteva explicații de fond privind cauzele care au dus la eșecul întregii întreprinderi.

Cuvinte cheie: Biserica Ortodoxă Română, Episcopia de la Vatra Românească, relații româno-americane, emigrația românească

* Gabriel Stelian Manea, Lecturer, Ph.D, Faculty of History and Political Sciences, “Ovidius” University of Constanta, Romania. gabrielstelianmanea@yahoo.com.

I. Introduction and Methodology

The present study is an analysis of publicly available information, which it seeks to identify, select and assemble in order to provide a cohesive whole and a coherent picture of the efforts concerning the process of uniting two ecclesiastical entities of the Romanian diaspora in the United States of America, information which are otherwise difficult to intuit, too little known and, in any case, too little presented, explained and analysed. In the tradition of church institutions and in their manner of functioning that we will refer to, there is the tendency and practice of giving the public only that information that they think the public needs. Most of the time this happens in their own publications, with an extremely limited print run and circulation, which makes them rather closed-circuit publications. If we add the lack of access to official documents or the silence of those involved in decision-making, the attempt to analyse such a topic is doomed to be partial and subject to future reconsiderations.

This being the situation, our study was based on following, for several years, official publications, statements and interviews, and based on them to reconstruct the stages of a process that was never carried to the end. Each of the two Orthodox dioceses of the Romanian diaspora in America publishes a magazine - *Solia*, *The Herald* and *Credința* [Eng. Trans: *Faith*]. For the most part, they are dedicated to the faithful and the clergy, the specifics of the published articles being mainly theological, pastoral or presenting events from the life of the community. In their pages, information, analyses or comments on important topics such as the relationship with other Orthodox communities, internal organization problems, or future projects are missing or rarely found. We found the News Agency *Basilica* and *Ziarul Lumina* [Eng. Trans: *The Light Newspaper*] more attractive and useful for our research. Although they still have a predominantly ecclesiastical and theological profile, the two publish more diversified and consistent materials on cultural, social, and even political topics.

Another clarification that is required from the start is concerns the methodological and terminological aspects. Ecclesiastical terminology appears to most as outdated, on the one hand, and complicated, confusing, on the other. It is the author's task to overcome these obstacles so that reading and understanding the essence does not raise problems. The present study deals with

two separate ecclesiastical entities, but whose names can cause confusion, especially when they are constantly repeated.

The first one is the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America (ROEA), also known among Romanians as The Episcopate of Vatra Românească (Episcopia de la Vatra Românească), after the name of its historical centre in Grass Lake, Michigan. This is part of the Orthodox Church in America and from an administrative and canonical point of view, is not subordinated in any way to the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC).

The second one is the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas. In the past, it was also called the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate of America and Canada and the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Archdiocese in America. Furthermore, the present Metropolia consists of two dioceses: the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States of America and the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada. This Metropolia maintains close administrative and canonical ties with the Romanian Orthodox Church.

For more methodological clarity, we have chosen that when we present the structure or leadership of these two entities, we do so separately, so that they are more clearly identified.

For a better understanding of the research theme, we found it useful to take some preliminary steps to familiarize the reader with the history of the two dioceses, a history that overlaps until the middle of the last century, with their current structure and leadership.

II. The History of a Schism

At the beginning of the 20th century, the first Romanian churches and parishes, whether of Greek-Catholic or Orthodox provenance, were established in the United States. Most of the Romanians who settled on American soil were peasants, raised in the ancestral faith and were forced, in the beginning, to attend services in Russian churches.¹ When their number increased, however, they agreed that it was necessary to bring priests from the country to establish Romanian parishes. The first such parish was established in Cleveland, in 1906, through the “Carpatina” society, but as its secretary was of Greek-Catholic faith, he turned to Blaj to send them a priest. This is how father Epaminonda Lucaciu

¹ Gabriel Stelian Manea, *Un adulter în familia comunistă. România și SUA în anii '60* (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2016), 38.

arrived in US. The Orthodox, who were also the majority among the Romanians in America, also sent for a priest, in the person of father Moise Balea, who founded an Orthodox parish in 1907.² Another name worth remembering is that of father Ion Podea, from the “Sf. Andrei” Church in Youngstown (Ohio), who struggled for years to raise the cultural level of Romanians. Through the efforts of father Ion Podea, in 1913, the Orthodox parishes on a wider territory formed a deanery, recognized by the American authorities. And in 1918, he also convened and presided over the congress that decided to establish the first Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America, under the authority of the ROC.³

It took another ten years until the Church Congress of the Romanian Orthodox parishes in the USA and Canada, would meet in Detroit, between April 25-28, 1929, to establish the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America, under the authority of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The decision was approved by the Romanian National Church Congress on November 21, 1929, and on November 1, 1930, Patriarch Miron Cristea signed the decree no. 10219 by which the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America was canonically recognized. It was only in 1935, following the March 24 elections, that Archimandrite Policarp Morușca was elected and ordained bishop of this new diocese.⁴

However, troubled moments followed for the diocese and, above all, for the Romanian faithful, all because of the intrigues of the communist power in Bucharest. In July 1939, Bishop Policarp went to Romania; the years of war and the establishment of the communist power followed, so the high hierarch could no longer return to his spiritual sons in the US. In this situation, a special Episcopal Congress, convened in Detroit, on March 28, 1947, refused to accept a new bishop, appointed by the church authorities in Bucharest, under the obvious influence of the atheist political power, in the person of Antim Nica, voting at the same time to assert total administrative autonomy from the Romanian Patriarchate.⁵ In response, under pressure from the communist regime, the Romanian Patriarchate registered in Michigan a new Romanian Orthodox Episcopate for North and South America. In addition, the widowed priest Andrei Moldovan was ordained in Sibiu, on November 12, 1950, and

² Theodore Andrica, „Americani de origine română”, *Revista româno-americană*, no. 4 (1946): 82.

³ Stelian Popescu-Boteni, *Relații între România și S.U.A. pînă în 1914* (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1980), 163.

⁴ Gerald J. Bobango, *The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. The First Half Century, 1929-1979* (Jackson, Michigan, The Romanian-American Heritage Center, 1979), 79-85.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 168-169.

become the new bishop. Arriving in the United States, Bishop Moldovan initiated a legal action against the old Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America in order to obtain all its properties. However, the legal action was rejected by a decision of the Federal Court in Cleveland, Ohio, in July 1952, prohibiting him from using the usurped title of Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America.⁶

Henceforth the rift between the two dioceses was evident and they continued to function separately and, worse, in an atmosphere of competition and even mutual hostility.

Meanwhile, the Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America, meeting in Chicago, between July 3-5, 1951, decided to break ties with the church authorities in Romania and elect the theologian Viorel (Valerian) Trifa⁷ as Auxiliary Bishop, until the death of Bishop Policarp (which occurred in 1958), who had not been able to return from Romania. On April 27, 1952, the new Auxiliary Bishop was ordained Hierarch, with the monastic name Valerian, by a Synod of Ukrainian Bishops. In March 1960, the diocese came under the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Metropolia, the future Orthodox Church in America. In 1984, with the retirement of Archbishop Valerian, the Episcopal Congress elected Nathaniel Pop as Bishop, who leads the Diocese of Vatra to this day. In 1996, he was elevated to the rank of Archbishop, and since 2002 he has been assisted by an Auxiliary Bishop, in the person of Irineu Duvlea ordained on November 2, 2002, at the “Saint George” Cathedral in Southfield, Detroit, Michigan.⁸

In the case of the Romanian Orthodox Missionary Episcopate of America and Canada, after the death of Bishop Andrei Moldovan in 1963, both the ROC and the communist regime in Romania looked for a replacement. The risk was that the diocese would remain without leadership for a long time and eventually disintegrate, all the more so since the relations with the Episcopate of Vatra were as tense as possible. Several names had been circulated for the leadership of the Episcopate, including Teoctist Arăpașul, Bartolomeu Valeriu Anania, or Nicolae Mladin. Eventually, the Ecclesiastic Congress of the Romanian

⁶ Ibid., 192-196.

⁷ Bishop Valerian Trifa's connections with the Legionary Movement in Romania, the interwar period, are not the subject of this study, but they represent one of the major themes that decisively influenced the history of Romanian Orthodoxy on American soil.

⁸ Ciprian Bâra, „După 61 de ani de istorie paralelă: Ortodoxia românească din America, din nou pe drumul unității”, *Ziarul Lumina*, June 20, 2008, <https://ziarullumina.ro/actualitate-religioasa/documentar/dupa-61-de-ani-de-istorie-paralela-ortodoxia-romaneasca-din-america-din-nou-pe-drumul-unitatii-55513.html>, accessed June 14, 2022.

Orthodox Missionary Episcopate in America took place between April 22th - 23th 1966 and had unanimously decided the election of Archimandrite Victorin Ursache for the vacant see of Bishop. On June 7 1966, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church recognized the election of the new Bishop and decided that his ordainment and enthronement to take place in August, the same year.⁹ After the retirement of Archbishop Victorin, there was an interim period at the head of the Archdiocese, the Holy Synod appointing His Grace Teofan as *locum tenens* of the Archdiocese, to be followed shortly by His Eminence Iosif of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of Western and Southern Europe. Meanwhile, in July 2000, the Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of America and Canada decided to establish a special commission, with a mandate to study the possibilities of ensuring succession to the archbishopric seat. Consequently, in September 2001, at the proposal of the special commission, the Diocesan Council of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada nominated Father Nicolae Corin Condrea and Brother Casian (Livius Ionel) Tunaru as possible candidates for the archbishop seat. On March 9, 2002, the Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada elected Father Nicolae Condrea as Archbishop of this Diocese. Eventually, on July 14, 2002, in the “Saint John the Baptist” Cathedral in Montreal, Canada, His Eminence Nicolae Condrea was ordained and installed as Archbishop of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of America and Canada. The event was attended by a delegation of the ROC, led by Patriarch Teoctist, representatives of the other sister Orthodox Churches in America, as well as many personalities from the ecclesiastical, cultural, and social life of Romania and America.¹⁰

Until now, the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America remained under the canonical jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church in America,¹¹ and in parallel, there was also the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas, canonically dependent on the Romanian Orthodox Church.¹²

⁹ See: Gabriel Stelian Manea, “An Episode in the History of Romanian Orthodox Communities in America: The Election of Bishop Victorin Ursache, in 1966”, *Historical Yearbook XIV* (2017): 75-84.

¹⁰ Bâra, „După 61 de ani de istorie paralelă”.

¹¹ The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, <https://www.roea.org/>, accessed August 13, 2022.

¹² Mitropolia Ortodoxă Română a celor două Americi, <https://mitropolia.us/>, accessed August 13, 2022.

III. The Current Structure of the Dioceses

Regarding the structure and dimensions of the two dioceses, two observations can be made. The Diocese of Vatra Românească has twice as many parishes as the Metropolia. However, the Metropolia has a more complex organizational structure due to the fact that it also includes two other dioceses with their parishes.

The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America includes a total of 102 parishes. Of these, 67 are in the United States, organized into 6 deaneries, and the remaining 35 are in Canada, organized into 3 deaneries. Also, within the Episcopate there are 4 monastic communities.¹³

The Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas has a more complex structure. It includes two dioceses, namely the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States of America and the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada. The first has under its jurisdiction 30 parishes and missions, as well as two monasteries. The second one includes 26 parishes and missions, to which is added a monastery.¹⁴ In addition, there are also two parishes in South America (Argentina and Venezuela) under the jurisdiction of the Metropolia.¹⁵

IV. The Current Leadership of the Dioceses

The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America is led by His Eminence Dr. Nathaniel (Popp). Archbishop Nathaniel was born in Aurora IL, in 1940, to a family of Romanian heritage (from the county of Satu Mare) who attended the Saint Michael the Archangel Romanian Greek-Catholic Church in Aurora. He attended Saint Procopius College, a Benedictine-operated liberal arts school and “Pontifical Eastern Rite Center” in Lisle IL. Called to Rome, Italy, he studied at Gregorian University and resided at the Greek College of Saint Athanasius.

¹³ The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, “Deaneries”, <https://www.roea.org/deaneries>, accessed August 9, 2022.

¹⁴ Mitropolia Ortodoxă Română a celor două Americi, „Director Parohii”, <https://mitropolia.us/index.php/ro/structura/director-parohii>, accessed August 9, 2022.

¹⁵ Gheorghe Anghel, “FactBox: Mănăstiri, parohii și misiuni din Arhiepiscopia Ortodoxă Română a SUA”, *Agenția de știri Basilica*, July 4, 2021, <https://basilica.ro/factbox-manastiri-parohii-si-misiuni-din-arhiepiscopia-ortodoxa-romana-a-sua/>, accessed August 7, 2022.

During his stay in Europe, he visited extensively Greece, Germany, Italy, and had a powerful and revelatory encounter at Mount Athos. His first visit to an Orthodox church was at this time as well. The spirituality deeply moved him, but the interior conflict of history and loyalty to the “Unia” made him keep Orthodoxy at a distance. He was ordained into the Holy Diaconate on July 17, 1966, and on October 23, 1966, he was ordained into the Holy Priesthood in the Romanian Uniate Church “San Salvatore” in Coppele, Rome. In January of 1967, he returned home and was appointed Assistant Priest of his home parish, Saint Michael. The spirituality, theology, and call of Orthodoxy, which had been dormant, began to beckon. Through father Vasile Hațegan, he was introduced to Archbishop Valerian (Trifa) who worked with him to be received into the ranks of the clergy of The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America (ROEA). He fully embraced the Orthodox Faith in the Chapel of “The Nativity of the Birthgiver of God,” Vatra Românească, Grass Lake MI, in the presence of Archbishop Valerian on February 15, 1968. For several years, he resided in a small monastic community on the Vatra property until he was appointed rector of the Holy Cross Church in Hermitage PA. At the Archbishop Valerian’s request for assistance in the administration of the expansive diocese, he was called to the Hierarchy by a Special Congress of The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate on September 20, 1980. His Consecration to the Episcopacy took place at Saint George Cathedral in Southfield/Detroit MI, on November 15, 1980. He was installed the next day as Bishop of Dearborn Heights, and was named an Auxiliary Bishop for The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. He assisted the Archbishop in this capacity until 1984, when the latter retired. On Sunday, November 17, 1984, Bishop Nathaniel was enthroned at Saint George Cathedral as ruling Hierarch of The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America.¹⁶

The Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas is led by His Eminence Nicolae Condrea. Born in Constanta (Romania), in 1967, Metropolitan Nicolae Condrea attended high school in Constanta and Bucharest (1981-1985), followed by theological studies at the Theological Institute/Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Sibiu (1988-1992). Between 1994 and 2001 he continued his studies at the Marc Bloch University in Strasbourg, where he obtained a diploma of Advanced Studies (1995) and was awarded the title of Doctor of Theology (2001) by the Faculty of Catholic Theology in Strasbourg.

¹⁶ The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, “Ruling Hierarch - Archbishop Nathaniel”, <https://www.roea.org/rulinghierarcharchbishopnathaniel>, accessed August 8, 2022.

In parallel, between 1997-2001 he served as an unmarried priest in the Romanian Orthodox parish in Stuttgart, Germany. He was ordained a monk in December 2001 at the Radu Vodă Monastery in Bucharest and for a short period, he was secretary at the Patriarchal Chancellery, until March 2002, when the Electoral Church Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada elected him as hierarch, election validated by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Ordination as bishop and installation took place in July 2002 in the “Saint John the Baptist” Cathedral in Montreal, Canada. In 2016, when the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas was established, the Holy Synod of the ROC elected him to the dignity of Metropolitan.¹⁷

V. Negotiations and Proposals for the Union of the Two Dioceses

Since the mid-2000s, the signs of a cautious rapprochement between the two dioceses have become more and more frequent and full of significance, announcing an evolution that while unexpected, would end abruptly a decade later. For example, starting in 2006, the *Basilica News Agency* began to constantly publish news and information regarding the activities and important events in the administrative or liturgical life of the Diocese of Vatra Românească. A meeting of the priests in the deaneries of New York, from March 2006, led by Auxiliary Bishop Irineu himself, was widely presented by the news agency, which covered all the administrative, financial and pastoral decisions taken at that time.¹⁸ The press agency of the Romanian Patriarchate was also interested in some minor construction works at the eparchial center in Vatra Românească, where, in a new annex, a museum and an archive were to function,¹⁹ but, also, in

¹⁷ Iulian Dumitrașcu, ”5 ani de când IPS Nicolae a fost întronizat ca Mitropolit al celor două Americi”, *Agenția de știri Basilica*, April 30, 2022, <https://basilica.ro/5-ani-de-cand-ips-nicolae-a-fost-intronizat-ca-mitropolit-al-celor-doua-americi/>, accessed August 7, 2022.

¹⁸ The Editorial Office, „Ședința preoților ortodocși din Protopopiatul de New York”, *Agenția de știri Basilica*, March 24, 2006, <https://basilica.ro/sedinta-preotilor-ortodocsi-din-protopopiatul-de-new-york/>, accessed June 28, 2022.

¹⁹ The Editorial Office, „Lucrări de extindere pentru Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America”, *Agenția de știri Basilica*, May 10 2006, <https://basilica.ro/lucrari-de-extindere-pentru-episcopia-ortodoxa-romana-din-america/>, accessed June 28, 2022.

the administrative and logistical preparations for the 75th Congress of the Episcopate, in 2007.²⁰

What can be observed starting from the second half of the 2000s is that there were several steps, several attempts from both Romanian dioceses established in America, attempts in which the Romanian Patriarchate was also co-opted, to restore the unity of Romanian Orthodoxy across the Ocean.

The first of these steps towards reconciliation was taken at the beginning of 2008, when on February 24-27, a delegation of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America, led by His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel, paid a visit to Romania and had discussions at the Patriarchal Palace with the representatives of the Romanian Patriarchate, led by His Eminence Archbishop Nifon of Târgoviste.²¹ The topic of discussions, according to the *Basilica* news agency press release, was “Practical ways of respecting religious freedoms and the canonical order for Orthodox Romanians in the USA and Canada”. According to the subsequent accounts of Archbishop Nathaniel, the official discussions addressed some historical issues of the relationship between the Diocese of Vatra Românească and the Romanian Patriarchate, including the sufferings of Bishop Policarp Morușca and Archbishop Valerian Trifa, at the hands of the Romanian communist regime. More importantly, the representatives of the Romanian Patriarchate also opened the topic of a possible union between the two Romanian Orthodox dioceses in North America.²²

The result of this historic meeting was a Joint Declaration containing several points. First of all, it was recognized that “the break between the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America (...) and the Romanian Patriarchy was caused by the establishment of the communist regime in Romania” and the diocese in America “did its duty to denounce, to clearly reject and to dissociate itself from all the evils of atheistic communism, which separated this diocese from its very mother Church...”. Being forced “to break its canonical ties with the Romanian Patriarchate (...) The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate never renounced the Romanian Patriarchate as the mother church”, but was forced to affiliate with

²⁰ The Editorial Office, „Au început pregătirile pentru Congresul Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române în America, *Agenția de știri Basilica*, April 15, 2007, <https://basilica.ro/au-inceput-pregatirile-pentru-congresul-episcopiei-ortodoxe-romane-in-america/>, accessed July 2, 2022.

²¹ The delegation of the overseas diocese included Archbishop Nathaniel, Fr. Laurentiu Lazăr, Fr. Remus Grama, Fr. Cătălin Miteșcu, Fr. Ian Pac-Urar, Fr. Romey Rosco. On behalf of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Archbishop Nifon, Archbishop Nicolae, Bishop Ciprian Câmpineanul, Fr. Mircea Uță and Fr. Ioan Armaș attended the meeting.

²² Î.P.S. Arhiepiscop Nathaniel, „Dialog cu Patriarhia Română”, *Solia – The Herald* LXXIII, no. 3-4 (March/April 2008): 19.

the Russian Orthodox Church of North and South America, later known as the Orthodox Church in America. The sufferings endured by the faithful and hierarchs of the Romanian Orthodox Church during the communist persecution were also recognized. The document welcomed the fact that, as early as 1991, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Patriarchate recognized the canonicity of the Episcopate and the apostolic succession of its hierarchs, and since then relations had evolved positively. The last and most important point of the Declaration stated that “the representatives of the Romanian Patriarchate and the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America express their sincere desire to achieve the unity of Romanian Orthodoxy on the American continent, in canonical connection with the Romanian Orthodox Church.”²³

The next concrete steps were taken in the summer of 2008. On June 4-6, the 76th Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America was held, which discussed the union of the two dioceses, starting, as mentioned by the adviser of the Romanian Patriarchate for external communities, Mircea Alexa Uță, from “the sincere desire for reconciliation of the hierarchy and the faithful of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate, which was actually achieved through the mutual request for forgiveness between the members of the delegations of the two Romanian Orthodox ecclesial structures in America”.²⁴ A document entitled “Proposal for the establishment of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of North America” was adopted.²⁵ Actually, the delegates to the Congress intended to ask the Romanian Orthodox Church “to recognize the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the two Americas formed by the unification of the current Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America and the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the two Americas”. The conditions for the establishment of this new church structure were that the Romanian Orthodox Church, named in the document “Mother Church”, to “irrevocably entrust the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the two Americas with all care for the Romanian Orthodox faithful in the two Americas”.

²³ Ibid., 20.

²⁴ The Editorial Office, „Cel de-al 76-lea Congres al Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române din America dezbată unirea cu Arhiepiscopia Ortodoxă Română din America și Canada”, *Agencia de știri Basilica*, July 4, 2008, <https://basilica.ro/cel-de-al-76-lea-congres-al-episcopiei-ortodoxe-romane-din-america-dezbatu-unirea-cu-arhiepiscopia-ortodoxa-romana-din-america-si-canada/>, accessed July 2, 2022.

²⁵ The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, „Propunere pentru înființarea Mitropoliei Ortodoxe Române din America de Nord”, <http://roea.orthodoxws.com/files/Press%20Releases/Propunerea-Mitropoliei-JUN08.pdf>, accessed August 10, 2022.

The chapter relating to the governance of the new Metropolia stipulated that it would be “totally independent” and would be governed according to its own Statute. It was also supposed to benefit from its own Metropolitan Synod which, together with the Metropolitan, would have maximum autonomy. “The Metropolitan Synod – the document stated – will be the highest spiritual and legal authority in all matters related to the Metropolia”. In addition, “the Romanian Orthodox Church will not impose any privilege of supervision or adjudication in any matter concerning the Metropolia”. Very important were the provisions related to the “election, ordination and enthronement of hierarchs”, all being “in the exclusive competence of the Metropolia”. In other words, the hierarchs, be they bishops, archbishops, and the Metropolitan Primate, were to be elected by the Metropolitan Congress. As a sign of the canonical links with the Mother Church, the elected Metropolitan, before his ordination or enthronement, was to be recognized in time by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church, and the patriarch could present the Grammata at the invitation of the Metropolitan Synod. The Metropolitan Congress was envisaged as the sole legislative body of the Metropolis, “subject only to the canonical authority of the Metropolitan Synod”, and its decisions “are not subject to the approval or ratification of the Romanian Orthodox Church”. However, “in case of any canonical problem that the Metropolitan Synod cannot solve, it (...) can invite the Romanian Orthodox Church to help solve that problem.”²⁶

As for the canonical links with the Romanian Orthodox Church, they referred to details regarding the cult, for example, the Metropolia receiving the Holy and Great Oil from the ROC or the fact that during the Holy Services, the Metropolitan had to commemorate the Patriarch. Also, as a testimony of the canonical ties, the Metropolitan or his delegate could have attended the meetings of the Holy Synod.²⁷

The document was debated by the Episcopal Congress in Vatra Românească, and His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel stated in a letter addressed to the other Romanian diocese in America that “the delegates decided to recognize the “Proposal” as an acceptable basis for the work of the Joint Dialogue Commission towards a final proposal that will be presented to the Romanian Orthodox Church”.²⁸ In response, His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae Condrea

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ The Editorial Office, „Al 76-lea Congres al Episcopiei”, *Solia – The Herald* LXXIII, no. 7-8, (July/August 2008): 21.

sent a letter to the delegates informing them that “[while] meeting in a working session this morning (July 5), the Congress of the Archdiocese discussed the proposal of the Joint Dialogue Commission (...) the delegates decided to unanimously approve the document in principle and authorize the Joint Dialogue Commission to continue its work...²⁹” Moreover, he also proposed a deadline by which point, a final form of the “Proposal” had to be ready, so that in April 2009, a festive Congress of unity would be organized, celebrating the 80th anniversary of the first Congress.³⁰

In an interview given to the *Lumina* newspaper, His Eminence Nicolae Condrea admitted, however, that there was still much to solve on the path of unification: the elaboration of a statute of the metropolia, the organization of a joint congress, the election of a metropolitan. Interestingly, the hierarch was talking about unification efforts undertaken since the 1990s, through the establishment of a Dialogue Commission in 1992, which had the mission of exploring the possibilities surrounding the issue of unification, but which did not work effectively until 2007-2008. Moreover, certain apprehensions related to a possible union were caused by the status of autonomy that the new metropolia would have had. But these apprehensions were dispelled after the visit of Archbishop Nathaniel to Romania and the meeting with Patriarch Daniel.³¹

At the time of the interview, in 2008, on the American continent there were several Orthodox communities, several hierarchs, each with its own diocese, more or less connected to a *mother church* in Europe. There was a Conference of Orthodox Bishops, established in 1961, but this was not a canonical structure, i.e. the bishops gathered within it did not form a synod, instead, it was only a form of collaboration based on “the brotherhood of the Orthodox bishops of the American continent”. This aspect was very important because in the eventuality of a union of the two Romanian dioceses and the creation of an autonomous metropolia, the latter organization would have become a model for the rest of the Orthodox communities in America: autonomous, but keeping the connection with the *mother church*.³²

After the decisions of the two Diocesan Congresses, on August 12, 2008, their Joint Dialogue Commission met in Southfield (Michigan). The discussions focused on improving the text of the “Proposal” for the establishment of the

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Augustin Păunoiu, „Interviu cu Înalț Prea Sfințitul Nicolae Condrea, Arhiepiscopul românilor din cele două Americi”, *Lumina de Duminică*, no. 29 (143) (July 20, 2008).

³² Ibid.

Metropolia in accordance with the decisions of the mentioned Congresses. The commission members also agreed that the process will be a lengthy one, requiring the clarification of many historical and current issues.³³

The next stage was a joint meeting of the Councils of the two dioceses, a meeting that took place at the Saint Mary's Cathedral in Cleveland, on March 21, 2009, with the participation of His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae and His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel. The meeting, described as *historic* by the news agency *Basilica* of the Romanian Patriarchate, discussed a series of issues related to the unity of Romanian Orthodoxy in America. The debates were mainly at the level of general principles and referred to: “the nature of the autonomy provided for in the Proposal; how this unity promotes the eventual administrative unity of all Orthodox Christians under one church authority in North America; the relationship of the future autonomous Metropolia with the Romanian Orthodox Church; the need for mutual research of the specific realities of both parties, but especially the way to reach the spiritual healing of the current division of the Orthodox Romanians in North America.”³⁴

Meanwhile, evidence of closeness to the Romanian Orthodox Church was also visible on another level. For example, in March 2009, His Eminence Teofan, the Metropolitan of Moldova and Bucovina, thanked His Eminence Nathaniel in a letter, for the financial aid worth 5,500 dollars intended to help the families in the north of Moldova, affected during the floods of July 2008. This amount of money, together with other donations, was used for the construction or consolidation of ten houses in the township of Rădăuți-Prut, Botoșani county.³⁵

The year 2009 and the Congress held by the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate from Vatra between July 2-5 did not bring any special update on the union issue. This is primarily because the various commissions established a year before to analyze legal, financial, and statutory issues had not completed their work, so no additions had been made to the “Proposal”. This did not mean that the efforts were abandoned. On the contrary, in the speech delivered before the diocesan Congress, Archbishop Nathaniel saw in the unity of the Romanian Orthodox

³³ The Editorial Office, “Comisia Mixtă de Dialog s-a întâlnit după Congres pentru a continua discuțiile despre unitate”, *Solia – The Herald* LXXIII, no. 9-10 (September/October 2008): 21.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ The Editorial Office, „Scrisoare de mulțumire din partea Înalț Prea Sfințitului Mitropolit al Moldovei și Bucovinei, Teofan”, *Solia – The Herald* LXXIV, no. 3-4 (March/April 2009): 21.

communities in America a first step towards a “completely unified autocephalous Church in America”.³⁶

Unfortunately, the developments were insignificant in the following period, the changes and improvements brought to the “Proposal” were not consistent, and at the Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the two Americas, held in Chicago, between July 1-4, this impasse was finally recognized. One of the delegates, father Nicholas Apostola, accepted that little progress had been made, but still recommended that discussions and meetings of the joint commissions should be held as often as possible. On the other hand, at the Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate, held on October 1-2, 2010, in Cleveland, the financial commission once again postponed the presentation of a report.

However, signs of rapprochement and desire for unity were there. For example, on April 29, 2011, on the occasion of the Feast of Life-giving Fount of Mother of God, the two archbishops celebrated the Holy Liturgy together at the Cathedral of the Holy Emperor Constantine and his mother Helen in Chicago. Both expressed their desire to repeat the service together “until the fulfilment of the plan of unity of the Orthodox Romanians in America”, as announced in the press release.

Though both parties expressed a willingness to cooperate, the financial and legal issues put the commissions of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Vatra in difficulty. These committees had nothing to do with ecclesiastical and canonical issues, but they had to analyze these aspects because the proposal essentially involved the union of two corporations, as some voices appreciated. In addition, they also had to determine how the new Metropolia was to function legally and financially.³⁷ In an interview given in April 2012, Archbishop Nathaniel recognized that from a theological and dogmatic point of view nothing separates the two Romanian dioceses, but he insisted on solving the legal-administrative and financial details, arguing that “the administrative and financial functioning of our diocese is done according to American laws, which are different from those in Romania”. These problems needed to be overcome before he could give a deadline.³⁸

³⁶ The Editorial Office, „Congresul Episcopiei 2009”, *Solia – The Herald* LXXIV, no. 7-8, (July/August 2009): 19.

³⁷ The Editorial Office, „Congresul Episcopiei pe anul 2011”, *Solia – The Herald* LXXVI, no. 9-10 (September/October 2011): 24.

³⁸ Adrian Ardelean, „Interviu cu Î.P.S. Nathaniel în timpul vizitei la comunitatea românească din Montreal”, *Solia – The Herald* LXXVII, no. 5-6 (May/June 2012): 18-19.

But this process of legal and financial analysis that the Americans call *due diligence* and which the representatives of the Diocese of Vatra regarded as foreign to the spirit of the Orthodox Church, had caused some dissatisfaction and impatience among the members of the other diocese. These complaints and even accusations were expressed in a “Report to the Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the two Americas from 2012, regarding the status of the dialogue with the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America”. The report, prepared by father Nicholas Apostola, the president of the Dialogue Commission, pointed out that “Our Archdiocese has engaged in patiently searching for a solution”, but the leadership of the Diocese of Vatra “acted unilaterally, interrupted and conditioned the dialogue on several occasions”, and in 2008, “unilaterally introduced a due diligence process into the discussion”. In this situation, the dialogue was at an impasse because of this process “mandated by the Episcopal Congress, without consultation or negotiation with the Archdiocese”. In the opinion of the author of the report, the practice of due diligence was borrowed from the world of corporate affairs, but the process itself could also take place after the signing of the merger or acquisition for mutual confirmation of financial and legal statements during negotiations. Thus, in the unification plan of the two dioceses, this process could have been carried out after the adoption of a decision in this regard.³⁹ The report also showed that, in March 2012, Archbishop Nicolae sent several proposals to Archbishop Nathaniel aimed at convening the Dialogue and Due Diligence Commissions, which in the presence of the hierarchs would identify the unresolved issues. The proposals remained unanswered. Under these conditions, the end of the report was far from hopeful: “patience based on hope and faith must eventually give way to reality (...) without immediate evidence to the contrary, we must admit the lack of will of our Romanian Orthodox brothers and sisters to work for a common future...”.⁴⁰

The Congress of the Archdiocese, held in Montreal from June 28 to July 1, 2012, voted a three-point resolution: 1) In the opinion of the Archdiocese, the due diligence process had fulfilled its purpose and was now closed; 2) “The wish was expressed to open a new stage in the dialogue with the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America, designed to build trust between the clergy and the

³⁹ Mitropolia Ortodoxă Română a celor două Americi, „Raport către Congresul Arhiepiscopiei Ortodoxe Române din cele două Americi din 2012, privind stadiul dialogului cu Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America”, <http://www.romarch.org/ro/news.php?id=3412>, accessed June 20, 2022.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

faithful of our dioceses, (...) a stage characterized by a process of openness and transparency, including through regular face-to-face meetings, both of the clergy and of other governing bodies; 3) The Archbishop is asked to study the ways and means by which this dialogue process with ROEA can be initiated”.⁴¹

Finally, the congress voted to establish a new commission to discuss the establishment of a Romanian Orthodox Metropolia in America, a commission to present a first report in 2014, with recommendations regarding the viability of the proposal and the steps necessary for its application.⁴²

However, gestures of goodwill continued to be made, especially from the Diocese of Vatra to the ROC, some of them even contained a strong symbolic importance. For example, during 2012, in all the parishes of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America, funds were collected for the recently started works at the People’s Salvation Cathedral in Bucharest. Archbishop Nathaniel urged his parishes to “encourage and promote the collection for this unique project” every Sunday. Consequently, 16,000 dollars were collected, which were transferred to the accounts of the Patriarchate in October 2012.⁴³ As thanks, Patriarch Daniel sent a letter to Archbishop Nathaniel, emphasizing that it is “a sign of fraternal love and appreciation”, a “gesture of solidarity and cooperation” that must be appreciated all the more as it comes “in a period of economic and financial crisis, which affects us all, but which, behold, is a blessed opportunity for practical cooperation of Romanians from the United States of America with those from Romania”.⁴⁴

Likewise, the contacts of the Diocese of Vatra were becoming more and more cordial with the institutions of the Romanian state in the US, for example with the Romanian Embassy in Washington, as shown by a book donation that Archbishop Nathaniel made in September 2013, a donation warmly received by Ambassador Adrian Vierța.⁴⁵

However, since there was no progress regarding the unification and establishment of a Metropolia, during the 83rd Congress of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America, held between September 3-6, 2015, a motion

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ The Editorial Office, „Episcopia a Contribuit Financiar la Ridicarea Catedralei „Mântuirii Neamului” din România”, *Solia – The Herald* LXXVII, no. 11-12 (November-December 2012): 23.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 22.

⁴⁵ The Editorial Office, “Episcopate Shares Romanian-American Publications with Romanian Embassy”, *Solia – The Herald* LXVIII, no. 9-10, (September-October 2013): 7.

was voted requesting for a letter to be sent to the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese from the two Americas, to state its position regarding the union.⁴⁶

The end of these administrative attempts to unify the two Romanian dioceses and to establish a metropolia came in 2016, when the Archdiocese was elevated to the rank of metropolia, in other words, it undertook on its own what should have been done together. On the occasion of the 80th congress of the Archdiocese, held between July 1-3, 2016, in Hamilton, Ontario, at least two decisions were adopted that changed the ecclesiastical landscape for Orthodox Romanians in North America. First, the Romanian Orthodox Diocese of Canada was established, with headquarters in Montreal.

Secondly, the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas was established, comprising the two dioceses – the old Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the two Americas and the newly established Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Canada.⁴⁷ Aside from these decisions, His Eminence Archbishop Nicolae Condrea was elevated to the rank of metropolitan. All these new decisions were confirmed in the meeting of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church on October 28-29, 2016.⁴⁸

On this occasion, which speaks to the total rupture of the two sides, the representative of the Romanian government, namely the State Secretary for Cults, Victor Opaschi, did not find it appropriate to mention in his message the existence of two Romanian dioceses, but referred, in general terms, to the Romanian *bishopric* in America and its role to “testify about the values and traditions of the Christian-Orthodox faith” and to “promote our image, of Romania and the Romanians”.⁴⁹ The enthronement of Metropolitan Nicolae Condrea took place on April 30, 2017, in the Cathedral of the Holy Emperor

⁴⁶ The Editorial Office, „Congresul Episcopiei 2015”, *Solia. – The Herald* LXXX, no. 9-10, (September-October 2015): 16.

⁴⁷ Mitropolia Ortodoxă Română a celor două Americi, „Istoric”, <https://mitropolia.us/pdf/istoric-mitropolie.pdf>, accessed June 28, 2022.

⁴⁸ Iulian Dumitrașcu, „Noi hotărâri ale Sfântului Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române relevante pentru viața bisericească a românilor din cele două Americi”, *Agenția de știri Basilica*, October 28, 2016, <https://basilica.ro/noi-hotarari-ale-sfantului-sinod-al-bisericii-ortodoxe-romane-relevante-pentru-viata-bisericeasca-a-romanilor-din-cele-doua-americi/>, accessed July 2, 2022.

⁴⁹ Gheorghe Anghel, „Victor Opaschi: Episcopatul român din America a dat mărturie despre valorile și tradițiile credinței creștin ortodoxe într-o lume din ce în ce mai seculară”, *Agenția de știri Basilica*, October 30, 2016, <https://basilica.ro/victor-opaschi-episcopatul-roman-din-america-a-dat-marturie-despre-valorile-si-traditiile-credintei-crestin-ortodoxe-intr-o-lume-din-ce-in-ce-mai-seculara/>, accessed July 2, 2022.

Constantine and his mother Helen in Chicago, in the presence of a delegation of the ROC led by His Eminence Metropolitan Nifon, Archbishop of Târgoviște.⁵⁰

VI. Conclusions

In the absence of concrete and direct explanations from the protagonists, the causes that led to the interruption of the unification process of the two Romanian dioceses in the United States and, therefore, to its failure, can only be surmised and, therefore, partial and subject to future corrections.

We should start with a specific feature of Orthodox churches in general, namely that they are organized on a national basis. The autocephalous Orthodox churches exercise their jurisdiction, both canonically and administratively, exclusively within delimited political borders. Canon 34 of the Holy Apostles states that: “each (bishop) should do only those that concern his parish (eparchy) and the villages under his rule”.⁵¹ More explicit is Canon 2 of the Second Ecumenical Synod, in Constantinople: “The bishops placed over a diocese should not extend over the churches outside their borders, nor disturb the churches, but according to the canons, the bishop of Alexandria should rule only those in Egypt, and the bishops of the East to administer only the East; (...) and the bishops of the diocese of Asia to administer only those of the diocese of Asia; and those of Pontus should rule only those of Pontus and those of Thrace only those of Thrace”.⁵² Finally, canon 8 of the Third Ecumenical Synod, in Ephesus, contains the following wording: “... none of the bishops who love God should include another diocese that was not previously and from the beginning under his hand or those before him”.⁵³ However, the present situation is much more complicated than the fathers of the Church could have ever envisioned. On the North American continent, as in the western part of Europe, immigration brought the development of Orthodox communities belonging to one or another national church. Several Orthodox Christians, originally from Central and Eastern Europe, settled in these regions. This situation put the Orthodox world in a new position: Churches with a strong

⁵⁰ Gheorghe Anghel, „30 aprilie 2017: Intronizarea Mitropolitului Ortodox Român al celor două Americi”, *Agenția de știri Basilica*, April 26, 2017, <https://basilica.ro/30-aprilie-2017-intronizarea-mitropolitului-ortodox-roman-al-celor-doua-americi/>, accessed July 2, 2022.

⁵¹ Ioan N. Floca, *Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe. Note și comentarii* (Sibiu: 2005), 27.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 71.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 82.

national connection now had their members scattered in other countries. The *Orthodox Diaspora* is a new phenomenon that Orthodoxy has just begun to address. In this context, one of the major challenges it faces is the existence of several overlapping jurisdictions, a phenomenon that contradicts the canonical tradition according to which any territory should fall under a single ecclesiastical authority. Taking all this into consideration, we believe that one of the causes of the failure was the impossibility of finding an answer, of deciding to which autocephalous church the new Metropolia resulting from the union would belong to: the Romanian Orthodox Church or the Orthodox Church in America. Of course, during the negotiations and in various proposals, autonomy was insisted on, but the canonical question of belonging to an autocephalous church remained unresolved.

Another cause could be traced to the different visions on the issue of unification that each of the two Dioceses had. For the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the two Americas, unification represented a way to heal the wounds of the past, to put an end to the divisions that did no honor to the Romanian communities in America. For this diocese, ecclesiastical, canonical, historical issues were a priority, its vision being, rather, an emotional one. In contrast, the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America was, as we have seen, the one with more parishes, with more believers, more comprehensive and, therefore, richer. For this reason, it is possible that the Diocese of Vatra would have insisted much more on the practical dimension of the unification and would have required a strict clarification of financial and administrative issues. The former wanted the union of some communities of Romanian Orthodox brothers, the latter believed that two companies must also unite, but added that the union should address all the legal and financial complications as well. From this rift, mutual accusations arose, with one camp arguing that financial matters were far from the Orthodox spirit, while the other highlighted the need to respect certain requirements of American legislation.

Finally, never during the negotiations, in any proposal, was the leadership of the new diocese resulting from unification discussed. Who would lead? His Eminence Nathaniel or His Eminence Nicolae? The matter was not one of personal pride, even less of resume, but one with deep ecclesiastical and administrative implications. A decision on this was delayed, ultimately avoided, because it had the potential to create animosity and jeopardize the entire process.

REFERENCES

- Andrica, Theodore. „Americani de origine română”, *Revista româno-americană*, no. 4 (1946).
- Anghel, Gheorghe. „FactBox: Mănăstiri, parohii și misiuni din Arhiepiscopia Ortodoxă Română a SUA”. *Agenția de știri Basilica*, July 4, 2021. <https://basilica.ro/factbox-manastiri-parohii-si-misiuni-din-arhiepiscopia-ortodoxa-romana-a-sua/>. Accessed August 9, 2022.
- Anghel, Gheorghe. „Victor Opaschi: Episcopatul român din America a dat mărturie despre valorile și tradițiile credinței creștin ortodoxe într-o lume din ce în ce mai seculară”. *Agenția de știri Basilica*, October 30, 2016. <https://basilica.ro/victor-opaschi-episcopatul-roman-din-america-a-dat-marturie-despre-valorile-si-traditiile-credintei-crestin-ortodoxe-intr-o-lume-din-ce-in-ce-mai-seculara/>. Accessed July 2, 2022.
- Ardelean, Adrian. „Interviu cu Î.P.S. Nathaniel în timpul vizitei la comunitatea românească din Montreal”. *Solia – The Herald LXXVII*, no. 5-6 (May/June 2012).
- Bâra, Ciprian. „După 61 de ani de istorie paralelă: Ortodoxia românească din America, din nou pe drumul unității”. *Ziarul Lumina*, June 20, 2008. <https://ziarullumina.ro/actualitate-religioasa/documentar/dupa-61-de-ani-de-istorie-paralela-ortodoxia-romaneasca-din-america-din-nou-pe-drumul-unitatii-55513.html>.
- Bobano, Gerald J. *The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. The First Half Century, 1929-1979*, Jackson, Michigan: The Romanian-American Heritage Center, 1979.
- Dumitrașcu, Iulian. „5 ani de când IPS Nicolae a fost întronizat ca Mitropolit al celor două Americi”. *Agenția de știri Basilica*, April 30, 2022. <https://basilica.ro/5-ani-de-cand-ips-nicolae-a-fost-intronizat-ca-mitropolit-al-celor-doua-americi/>. Accessed August 7, 2022.
- Dumitrașcu, Iulian. „Noi hotărâri ale Sfântului Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române relevante pentru viața bisericească a românilor din cele două Americi”. *Agenția de știri Basilica*, October 28, 2016. <https://basilica.ro/noi-hotarari-ale-sfantului-sinod-al-bisericii-ortodoxe-romane-relevante-pentru-viata-bisericeasca-a-romanilor-din-cele-doua-americi/>. Accessed July 2, 2022.
- Floca, Ioan N. *Canoanele Bisericii Ortodoxe. Note și comentarii*. Sibiu: 2005.

- Î.P.S. Arhiepiscop Nathaniel. „Dialog cu Patriarhia Română”. *Solia – The Herald* LXXIII, no. 3-4 (March/April 2008).
- Manea, Gabriel Stelian. “An Episode in the History of Romanian Orthodox Communities in America: The Election of Bishop Victorin Ursache, in 1966”. *Historical Yearbook* XIV (2017): 75-84.
- Manea, Gabriel Stelian. *Un adulter în familia comunistă. România și SUA în anii ‘60*. Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2016.
- Mitropolia Ortodoxă Română a celor două Americi. „Director Parohii”. <https://mitropolia.us/index.php/ro/structura/director-parohii>. Accessed August 9, 2022.
- Mitropolia Ortodoxă Română a celor două Americi. „Istoric”. <https://mitropolia.us/pdf/istoric-mitropolie.pdf>. Accessed June 28, 2022.
- Mitropolia Ortodoxă Română a celor două Americi. „Raport către Congresul Arhiepiscopiei Ortodoxe Române din cele două Americii din 2012, privind stadiul dialogului cu Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America”. <http://www.romarch.org/ro/news.php?id=3412>. Accessed June 20, 2022.
- Păunoiu, Augustin. „Interviu cu Înalt Prea Sfințitul Nicolae Condrea, Arhiepiscopul românilor din cele două Americi”. *Lumina de Duminică*, no. 29 (143) (July 20, 2008).
- Popescu-Boteni, Stelian. *Relații între România și S.U.A. până în 1914*. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1980.
- The Editorial Office. „Cel de-al 76-lea Congres al Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române din America dezbată unirea cu Arhiepiscopia Ortodoxă Română din America și Canada”. *Agenția de știri Basilica*, July 4, 2008. <https://basilica.ro/cel-de-al-76-lea-congres-al-episcopiei-ortodoxe-romane-din-america-dezbate-unirea-cu-arhiepiscopia-ortodoxa-romana-din-america-si-canada/>. Accessed July 2, 2022.
- The Editorial Office. „Au început pregătirile pentru Congresul Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române în America”. *Agenția de știri Basilica*, April 15, 2007. <https://basilica.ro/au-inceput-pregatirile-pentru-congresul-episcopiei-ortodoxe-romane-in-america/>. Accessed July 2, 2022.
- The Editorial Office. „Lucrări de extindere pentru Episcopia Ortodoxă Română din America”. *Agenția de știri Basilica*, May 10 2006. <https://basilica.ro/lucrari-de-extindere-pentru-episcopia-ortodoxa-romana-din-america/>. Accessed June 28, 2022.

- The Editorial Office. „Ședința preoților ortodocși din Protopopiatul de New York”. *Agencia de știri Basilica*, March 24, 2006. <https://basilica.ro/sedinta-preotilor-ortodocsi-din-protopopiatul-de-new-york/>. Accessed June 28, 2022.
- The Editorial Office. „Congresul Episcopiei 2015”. *Solia – The Herald* LXXX, no. 9-10 (September-October 2015).
- The Editorial Office. „Episcopate Shares Romanian-American Publications with Romanian Embassy”, *Solia – The Herald* LXVIII, no. 9-10 (September/October 2013).
- The Editorial Office. „Episcopia a Contribuit Financiar la Ridicarea Catedralei „Mântuirii Neamului” din România”. *Solia – The Herald* LXXVII, no. 11-12 (November-December 2012).
- The Editorial Office. „Congresul Episcopiei pe anul 2011”. *Solia – The Herald* LXXVI, no. 9-10 (September/October 2011).
- The Editorial Office. „Congresul Episcopiei 2009”. *Solia – The Herald* LXXIV, no. 7-8 (July/August 2009).
- The Editorial Office. „Scrisoare de mulțumire din partea Înalț Prea Sfințitului Mitropolit al Moldovei și Bucovinei, Teofan”. *Solia – The Herald* LXXIV, no. 3-4 (March/April 2009).
- The Editorial Office. „Comisia Mixtă de Dialog s-a întâlnit după Congres pentru a continua discuțiile despre unitate. *Solia – The Herald* LXXIII, no. 9-10 (September/October 2008).
- The Editorial Office. „Al 76-lea Congres al Episcopiei”. *Solia – The Herald* LXXIII, no. 7-8 (July/August 2008).
- The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. “Deaneries”. <https://www.roea.org/deaneries>. Accessed August 9, 2022.
- The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. „Propunere pentru înființarea Mitropoliei Ortodoxe Române din America de Nord”. <http://roea.orthodoxws.com/files/Press%20Releases/Propunerea-Mitropoliei-JUN08.pdf>. Accessed August 10, 2022.
- The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America. “Ruling Hierarch - Archbishop Nathaniel”. <https://www.roea.org/rulinghierarcharchbisho-pnathaniel>. Accessed August 8, 2022.