

**SAINT ANTHIM, A SPIRITUAL BEACON
AND A CONFESSOR OF FAITH
OPENING SPEECH**

His Excellency, Archbishop TEODOSIE*

Abstract. Romanian culture and spirituality had and still has in Saint Anthim a spiritual beacon and a confessor of faith. We simply cannot honor Romanian culture and spirituality unless we are also honoring Saint Anthim, as someone who came in Romania from abroad, someone of a different language, someone of another culture, but someone who identified himself with the Romanian language, with the culture and with the spirituality of the Romanians.

Keywords: Saint Anthim, a confessor of faith, Romanian culture and spirituality.

Mr. Professor representative of our Rector (“Ovidius” University), Mr. Dean from the Faculty of History, distinguished guests from Georgia and the Academy of Romanian Scientists, beloved Professors and beloved students,

We are gathered here in the honor of a great personality, in the honor of spirituality, in the honor of Romanian historiography and in the honor of Romanian culture. Saint Anthim the Ivirite is for us truly the most distinguished personality among those who have brought a contribution to Romanian culture and spirituality.

When we honor our culture and spirituality we honor also someone who came here from abroad, someone of a different language, someone of another culture, but someone who identified himself with the Romanian language, with the culture and with the spirituality of the Romanians.

He is indeed for us a landmark personality who has grown into the body of our country, within the Romanian spirituality and within the Romanian culture and who is still relevant for our times.

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Saint Anthim the Ivirite is a symbol of Romanian spirituality. At the same time, he was a genuine personality with international dimensions.

He brought the light of print into the Romanian Principality where he took care of the Romanians and of the people from his natal country, Georgia, alike. As well, from the realms from where he was brought in these Romanian lands by the Saint Voyvod Constantin Brâncoveanu, from Constantinople, he cared for the Arab Christians to whom he dedicated books. He overcame any expectations from the country that adopted him.

He was a founder for the Romanian language and he introduced in the cult of our Church Romanian language among the liturgy books of cult that he promoted.

A philosopher, a literate and a theologian was he, the one who by his Didache took the Romanian language to the highest heights of affirmation, aiding its cult dimension for the times and still beautiful in our times.

He was a great artist. He was a painter, a sculptor, and also a great promoter of the technique of the printing press.

He embraced the whole cultural register in which he manifested during his times and which he promoted to the highest standards of his time with exquisite professionalism.

A prodigious leader of the Church he was and an organizer of the monastic life and of the life of the Church in a brilliant way, taking care of all the states in our Church, for as a bishop, and then, as a metropolitan, Saint Anthim the Ivirite led the Church life to a summit of good feelings and good organization. Founder of Churches, as well, founder of social establishments, with solicitude to the poor people so that this orientation comprised the entire social, cultural and spiritual life, he was nonetheless a magnificent diplomat.

He has printed over 60 books, among which many were authored by him, and other were of authors of liturgical books of cult. Over a third party of the books printed were in Romanian language and thus he has contributed to the maturity of the expression in Romanian language in the Orthodox cult, but also in the current speaking.

All these entitle us to capitalize upon the personality of Saint Anthim in our times when the spiritual grounding, the cultural assertion and the acquiescence of the national identity are extremely necessary.

He was a unparalleled personality in his times and a personality who sent a ray of light to our times. And we nourish ourselves even today with the light of his cultural, spiritual and national preoccupations.

He overcame his condition of man arrived from another country, with another language and culture, and he succeeded that to such an extent so that he overpassed all the Romanians during his time in the expression of the Romanian spirituality and feelings.

We have definitely savored the spirituality of Saint Anthim, while serving for 8 years as a singer at Anthim Monastery, a monastery which obviously conveys his name, in its entirety, for he was called a saint by the people before his proclamation. Anthim Monastery carries on both his name and also preserves the imprint of his personality by the architecture of this monastery, by the art promoted at this monastery and this way this monastery becomes a benchmark.

He was a man of faith, of prayers, of culture and of an authentic spirituality. During the communism in Romania, Anthim Monastery was the strongest oasis of spirituality for Bucharest.

Each Sunday and each religious feast not only the Church was full, but also the yard of the monastery. He was a confessor of faith and he is a confessor of faith as well after his departure from this life to the next, eternal one, through the immortal work that he left behind.

No one could have stopped the Christians to say “We are going at Saint Anthim” although during that times he was not yet Saint Anthim in the calendar. This is Orthodox spirituality. The people acclaim the saints and the people proclaim the saints. Here is the fulfillment of the word of the psalmist. It is like a monumental tree with august foliage under which the Orthodox believers take refuge in our country and it is this joy that the Christians from Georgia and from all over the world should experience, too.

From the multitude of the books written by Saint Anthim great theological works were created: liturgical and rhetorical works, works of homiletics and catechetical, works of practical teachings.

This work remains eternal as Saint Anthim remains eternal, vested in heavenly light. Saint Anthim is the most powerful connecting bridge of Romanians with the Georgian people, a people which has given impressive personalities to the world, a people with a Church so old and so authentic that we are privileged to maintain these relations with the Georgian people.

This is the reason why we are welcoming you Mr. President of the Academy and gentlemen from the Georgian delegation, the high representatives from the Academy of Romanian Scientists, for we are doing that with tremendous joy to go together through the landmarks of the work of the Saint Anthim the Ivirite, who has truly constituted himself as an exceptional personality in our history, culture and spirituality.

Saint Anthim effortlessly made the Romanians and the Georgians brothers and now we should strengthen our relations and identify with one another through this personality, through this heritage of common spirituality.

Allow us to thank you for coming here and let us say that we are asking you all to express yourself.

Translation by Henrieta Anișoara Șerban
