

THE ORDER OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT IN ROMANIA AND ITS RELATIONSHIPS
WITH SOCIETY (1918 – 1989)

(Summary of Ph. D. thesis)

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Monasticism was born spontaneously at the ending of the 3rd century and the beginning of the 4th century, in Egypt, as a specific form of Christian life mainly based on celibacy. Those who chose this new lifestyle were laymen who wished to live their relationship with God as intensely as possible, for which purpose they severed all connections with ordinary people and Christians. As a result, the first monks lived their lives in isolation (they settled in the desert) and extreme austerity. From the very beginning there had been two forms of monastic life: anchoritic monasticism (a monk was isolated from society as well as from the other monks) and cenobitic monasticism (monks chose the ascetic life but dwelled together in a community). While the former had no specific rules, the latter was regulated fairly specifically by St. Pachomius. The choice of this special form of Christian life had to be totally free and the monks could leave the community if they wished so.

Under both its forms, monasticism spread very rapidly across the Christian territories of the time, reaching Asia Minor which was to become the cradle of the Order of Saint Basil the Great. This expansion did not have only positive consequences: in some areas early monasticism erred either by promoting excessive asceticism or by interfering with the church and society, leading to the destabilization of both. Such excesses were strongest in Asia Minor where they even caused anarchic episodes.

The beginning of the second half of the 4th century marks the birth of St. Basil the Great. As he belonged to a wealthy family, young Basil could attend the best schools of the time, even

those that were far away from his home (as was the case of Alexandria). On his return, Basil spent some time observing monastic life and even visited some ascetic communities; thus he travelled as far as the Egyptian desert. Eventually he joined a monastic community located on his family's estate. After a while, he became the leader of the community.

Having become an ascetic, Basil began to question certain aspects of monastic life, especially as he had closely seen some of its dysfunctions. Life in complete solitude was unacceptable to Basil; he opted for a type of ascetic life which required living in isolation from the world but in such a manner that the ascetics could earn their own living. As Basil believed, communities should each have its own superior, without all of them being under the authority of a single supervisor (in other words they were to be decentralized). The superior should ensure that discipline is observed within the community. Another aspect regarded as very important was the prayer programme, which Basil conceived in such a manner that the monks could also do manual work. This work was to be informed by the virtue of charity in the sense that it had first to benefit those in need and only then the monks themselves. The superior had the right to establish, according to the specific circumstances of his community and in the spirit of monastic discipline, what activities the community was supposed to undertake. According to Basil, ascetic practices (fasting and abstinence from food) had to be moderate. As both the Church and monasticism were rooted in the Holy Scripture, Basil believed that the monks should not show any hostility towards the Church but rather serve it with all their strength and abilities. In order to facilitate observance of all these principles, Basil relocated ascetic communities from the desert to inhabited areas, or places nearby. His whole conception of monasticism and many practical matters derived from the application of these principles can be found in St. Basil's writings, structured in the form of questions and answers. The author himself did not call his writings "Rules", the name was given by later followers of these rules who, also noticing their beneficial effect, called Basil "the Great". Basil was later to become a bishop; he also wrote other works of major importance for Christianity. For his life as well as his writings, the whole Christianity proclaimed Basil a saint.

The radical corrections that Basil brought to monasticism proved highly efficient, as the communities started to take care of the poor, the sick, the pilgrims and the orphans. The monks began to build hospitals and charity centers and devoted themselves to pedagogical work with

children and the youth. It is for this reason that the monasticism which, in its future development, was based on St. Basil the Great's principles was called Basilian monasticism.

The main principles of Basilian monasticism are well worth remembering, as they will be the principles that will also inform the life and work of the Greek-Catholic monks in Transylvania more than 1,500 years later.

Renewed as it has been shown above, monasticism was to become very strong and influential from an economic point of view as well, and during the 5th and the 6th centuries it reached its climax. However, this situation was hardly satisfying, as it brought about new incompatibility between asceticism as practiced and asceticism as proclaimed. Besides, some monks started to take advantage of this state of things and to mix asceticism and deception in their relationship with the church and society. All these developments worried the authorities, the religious ones included, and decisions were taken (some even at ecumenical Councils) so that the monks could be kept under control. Under these circumstances, it was decided that the ascetics were to be subordinated to the local bishop. Emperor Justinian also took disciplinary decisions for this category of Christians. Irrespective of where these regulations came from, they were issued from outside the monastic communities and deeply affected the ascetics as they restricted their independence. In addition to these problems of asceticism, the iconoclastic crisis emerged. During the middle of the 8th century, the crisis was to ruin monasticism, as the monks supported the legitimacy of the veneration of icons, and iconoclasm also became a fight against monasticism. The violence directed against the monks was of great, almost unprecedented, intensity. The two periods of this crisis were eased by the arrival of another "providential man" for the monks, Theodore the Studite. He clearly saw that monasticism had been gravely wounded from without, but he also saw that it had already been suffering from serious diseases of its own: the disappearance of equality among monks, the fact that some persons joined a monastic community while retaining their property and the cases when nobles were accepted in monasteries with their servants, thus living a lax life, refusing to share communal meals etc.

The final triumph of Orthodoxy (i.e. of the "correct belief") after the iconoclastic crisis enabled the monks to regain the esteem they had formerly enjoyed and to begin a new life.

In response to the major problems that had undermined asceticism from within, Theodore the Studite recommended a return to St. Basil the Great's principles and their implementation in daily life. Like Basil, Theodore rooted asceticism in the Holy Scripture. For the latter, however,

ascetic life had to be founded not only on the Scripture but also on fidelity to monastic and church tradition. This is the element of novelty that Theodore brought to St. Basil's conception of monasticism. For his life and work, Theodore was also proclaimed a saint by both the Orthodox and the Catholic Church.

After the crisis of the 9th century was left behind, monasticism entered a new stage of expansion. At the request of king Rostislav of Great Moravia, brothers Cyril and Methodius were sent from Constantinople to christen the Moravians. However, despite their huge efforts (which included the creation of the well-known Glagolitic alphabet) the endeavour was not successful and these regions were christened by Rome's representatives. Things happened the other way round in Bulgaria, which seemed initially inclined to receive the Christian faith from Rome, but eventually Khan Boris, his court and the aristocracy were baptized and converted to Christianity via Byzantium. From Bulgaria, Byzantine Christianity spread to Serbia and Macedonia, reaching the Principality of Kiev whose prince Vladimir was baptized in 988 and demanded that his subjects should do the same. Obviously in the territories where Byzantine Christianity was established, monasticism itself developed in the Basilian-Studite tradition.

The successes achieved by the monks after the iconoclastic crisis and following the expansion of Byzantine Christianity made them slowly but surely repeat the mistakes of the past, with the consequence that at the turn of the millennium monasticism found itself in a third period of weakness. This time as well, the wealth accumulated by monastic communities was at the origin of the spiritual disease of asceticism. A greater evil was still to occur, namely the Great Schism of 1054, which caused the most serious division within Christianity.

Shortly before the Great Schism, in 1037, monastic life is believed to have emerged in the territories around Kiev. The monks organized themselves according to Theodore the Studite's tradition, and monastery Kievo-pečerskaja Lavra became a reference institution for monasticism in this area, also because its monks established a series of rules that regulated the main monastic activities of daily life. This monastery stimulated a great flourishing of ascetic life in the region, which was only hindered by the divisions within the Principality of Kiev caused by Mongolian invasions. Given these attacks, very many monks took refuge in neighbouring territories, which were later to become the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (during the 13th century). In these territories, under Catholic influence, monasticism began to flourish again in the 13th and the 14th centuries with the consequence that new monasteries started to be built. One of these was

consecrated to the Most Holy Trinity in Vilnius, and it was to be of great importance to the Order of St. Basil the Great.

Major changes took place in Europe and Asia beginning from the second half of the 14th century: the Turks started their expansion in Europe. In an effort to face this threat, the Councils of Ferrara-Florence, then of Basel-Ferrara-Florence-Rome, were convened in the hope that the unity of the Christian world could be restored. The decisions of the two Councils were good but were never implemented and shortly after the closing of the last act of these Councils, Constantinople fell in 1453. Yet another challenge to Christianity emerged in the form of Martin Luther's "Reformation" in Germany, which resulted in the Western schism. Lutheranism, and especially Calvinism, spread to the Eastern borders of Europe. Under such circumstances, the idea of a religious unity between the East and the West was considered again but only in the context of local Churches.

Given these great geo-political and religious changes in Europe and Asia, monasticism searched for the best solutions to adjust and survive. And it did find them. The fact is proven by what happened during the Mongolian and the Ottoman invasions. With respect to the latter it is worth mentioning that, although monasticism had close ties to Byzantine society, as it has been shown above, when the Empire disappeared after the fall of Constantinople monasticism was able to survive and function even under "pagan" rule. Thus, while Christianity could not reunite in order to face the Ottoman threat, the monks adopted the strategy of submission, which ensured the survival of monasticism.

The closing of the 16th century saw the union of a part of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine and Belarus with the Church of Rome (the Union of Brest-Litovsk, 1596). An important consequence was that a large number of monks from the Metropolitanate of Kiev signed the act of union while also reforming their asceticism. On that occasion, two monks particularly stood out: Iozafat Kuntsevyč (who died a martyr, murdered by opponents of the union) and Iosif Rutskyj, both from the Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity in Vilnius. The reform of the united monks took place with the help of the Jesuit monks whose expertise and experience ensured its success. The main effect of the reform was that each monastic community (monastery) was ruled over by a superior (also called 'hegumen' or 'archimandrite') and all communities were under obedience to the superior general (also known as the 'protoarchimandrite'). Each superior was helped by a council. The superior general was subordinated to the united Metropolitan of Kiev.

Moreover, the superiors no longer held their positions for life or for an indeterminate period of time.

Under the influence of the union with Rome of the Church in Galicia (in 1646), a unionist movement initiated by two Basilian monks, led to another union with the Roman Church, that of the Ruthenian Church (the Union of Uzhhorod).

After the reform, all Basilian communities ended up under the supervision of one superior. The fact was against St. Basil the Great's principles but had an advantage: it ensured uniformity of monastic discipline and thus avoidance of the risk of errors (which were made during the first millennium, among other reasons, because of lack of uniformity of discipline).

In 1743, following the recommendations of Pope Benedict XIV, all the monks from the then Polish and Lithuanian territories were united by the local bishops in a Congregation consisting of two provinces: one Polish and the other Lithuanian. Because of geo-political changes, eight years later there were four provinces. Three of them ended up in the new Russian Empire and the fourth, Galicia, in the Austrian Empire. As a result of Tsar Nicholas I's persecutions against Catholicism, all Basilian monasteries united with Rome were closed on Russian land. The province under Austrian rule also had to suffer the consequences of Josephinism: the superiors could not be from outside the Empire, the large monasteries were subordinated to bishops and the small ones were closed, foreign monks could not be accepted in monasteries etc. Later on, at the beginning of the 19th century, Basilian monks regained the right to organize themselves according to their own traditions. The outcome of this new state of things was the most important reform of the united Basilians, the one initiated in 1882 at the monastery of Dobromyl (the Dobromyl Reform) which was also implemented with the help of the Jesuit monks. From then on the Order became subordinated directly to the Pope. The benefits of the reform were manifold: stronger spiritual life of higher quality, stronger intellectual life, intensified editorial and missionary activity, structural reorganization of the Basilian monks. Another outcome of the reform was the fact that Basilian monks from Galicia were sent to provide spiritual support for the Ukrainian emigration in Brazil, Argentina, the USA and Canada (states whose Basilian provinces are strong even today).

In Romania ascetic life began during the 3rd and the 4th centuries in Dobruja. Between the 4th and the 7th centuries, cenobitic monasticism was established in the Carpathian Mountains (Buzău region). Another area with monastic settlements was Banat (in the 7th century). In

Transylvania asceticism was brought from Banat and Wallachia. Romanian asceticism was mostly of the hermitic type but in close connection with the Church and folkloric traditions. For this reason it evolved in total accord with the Church and the people but remained rather passive. When the Great Schism occurred, Romanian monks sided with the Eastern Church.

It was monk Nicodim who organized Romanian asceticism, after the fashion of Mount Athos, during the 14th century. The monks who used to live in isolation now dwelled together in large old buildings, the head of each community being the hegumen. All Romanian monks were organized in the same manner and followed the Rules of St. Basil the Great.

From the beginning to the seventeenth century, the Romanian monasticism was simple, isolated, and hermitage-like, being present mainly in the Carpathians. One very interesting aspect of the Romanian monasticism is that, in opposition with the Byzantine one, it has never been in conflict with the society, but on the contrary. However, this had also negative aspects. The monks remained common persons who did not exert positive influence on the people. After Nicodim organized the monasticism, the monks became more active and started to develop activities in the service of the people. Nevertheless, the social coordinate has never been and will not be a priority either for the Orthodox, or for the monks, as the Eastern Christianity has always had a mystic structure, unlike the Western Christianity, which is characterized by activism.

Things changed radically in Transylvania after the union with the Church of Rome (1698-1700). In the context of adhesion to Catholicism, the very act of “The Union of Alba Iulia” contained very important social issues. It seems that the Union with Rome did not have a great response among the monks as, at the moment of the Union and soon after the signing of that act, the austere persons were not very visible. Most certainly this is the reason why Inocentiu Micu Clain was not a member of the monks and became one only later (at Muncaci) in order to preserve the Eastern tradition (according to which the bishops must proceed from the monks). Undoubtedly, Inocentiu appreciated the monks and, when the Bishopric of Blaj was established, he initiated the building of a monastery in the town, and began its construction. But the inauguration of the monastery *The Holy Trinity* and the settlement of the monks (1747) were the work of his vicar, and later his successor, Petru Pavel Aron. The involvement of the monks in the social life was commendable. They printed various publications at the remade printing house in Blaj and worked as teachers at the famous schools of Blaj which had been opened in that time (1754).

Eleven years after the opening of the first Uniate Basilian monastery, Aron, the bishop who had inaugurated it, was not content with the life of asceticism of the monks, because they did not live in agreement with his perception of a life of asceticism, a lifestyle he actually had practised. The truth must have been in between. On the one hand, the monks must have lived a questionable life of “asceticism”. On the other hand, the bishop was not able to force the asceticism, sometimes exaggerated in his life, as a criterion for the asceticism of all monks. Following the idea of a monasticism based on rigid fasts and harsh life (which, as it was shown, was contrary to the vision of Saint Basil the Great) the bishop takes action in a direction that would prove wrong – the building of a second Basilian monastery, *The Annunciation*, in Blaj. Saint Basil the Great used to assert that there should not be two Basilian communities in the same place. The bishop’s action in Blaj proved once more that Basil the Great was perfectly right in this respect.

The second monastery of Blaj was quickly built (from the bishop’s own funds) and within four years received its monks (1762). Five of the pupils who were even younger than the age of 16 were “made” monks by the bishop. The life in *The Annunciation* was so austere (mainly regarding food) that some of the monks were extremely weak or even died due to this.

However, the errors did not end at the death of bishop Aron (1764). His successor, Atanasie Rednic, continued them. He aimed, even from the beginning of his episcopate, to reform the clerical and monastic life and began to do this based on some ideas inherited from Aron. Therefore, one important element of the reform was the strict fast which he imposed also in the monastery *The Holy Trinity*. The reform of Rednic ended at his death (1772). Grigore Maior, his successor on the Episcopal throne, wished to correct things and eased the fast, but the monks interpreted this as they wished, going to the other extreme: the monastic life ceased following a minimum set of norms that would qualify it as such. Those circumstances, overlapped by Josef II’s anti-monastic attitude and Bishop Bob’s spirit of order, led the Basilian monasticism to the razor’s edge.

The first Provincial Concilium of the Romanian Church United with Rome (1872) regarded the Basilian monks and took several decisions related to the restoration of the Basilian Order and the second Provincial Concilium (1882) established that the decisions be urgently put in use. None of the established measures were put in practice and there was no mere attempt to do so. Modest efforts in the spirit of the decisions of the Provincial Conciliums are to be found in the documents of the Lugoj Eparchy at the beginning of the twentieth century. The bishop of

Lugoj had tried to implement the Basilian life at Prislop, but everything failed maybe also due to the First World War.

Despite all the errors made with regards to the Romanian Uniate Basilian monks, or which the monks themselves did in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, they did not completely disappear from the Romanian Church United with Rome; they represented a faded presence, but the continuity was ensured, even by one single monk. That was the situation at the end of the nineteenth century, a sad, almost desperate situation, one could say. But things were about to change radically, due to the “providential man, Father Maxim Aurel, monk Atanasie.

The long walks on the corridors of the Theological Seminary of Blaj of young Aurel Maxim, who was meditating at the Basilian monks that once lived and worked there, determined him to become one of their followers. After an exchange of divergent opinions with Metropolitan Bishop Mihali, he went to the Basilian monastery of Mariapocs where he became a monk. After completing all the monastic stages, he was ordained as priest. Later he adhered at the dobromilian reform and completed the monastic stages again. He was sent to the monastery where he had started his monastic life in order to implement the monastic reform there, too. After that he managed to bring the Basilian reform in our country. Actually, he confirmed that “the man blesses the place” because when he arrived at Bixad (June 1925) he was the only reformed Uniate Basilian. He determined the “old” monks (who did not proceed from the family of the Uniate Basilian monks of Blaj) to complete the reform and later on he gave a new life to the monastery of Bixad.

In the spirit of moral and historic truth, we need to make a very important statement. The monastery of Bixad used to be situated on the territory of the Eparchy of Gherla from the moment when the eparchy was established (1853) until 1930. From that moment on it was located on the territory that was under the pastoral office of Bishop Alexandru Rusu. Both Bishop Iuliu Hossu and Bishop Rusu understood rapidly the importance of the “new” Romanian Uniate Basilians who had started the monastic life and activity on their pastoral territories. Consequently, they supported them and used their potential. But none of them interfered in the internal, monastic problems of the Basilians.

As soon as the membership of the Basilians grew and they were stronger, the monks, on their own initiative, started interacting with the society in a modest and balanced way, without meddling into those social problems that were not concerning them. One of the first means of

interaction between the Order and the society was to grant young men proceeding from poor families the opportunity to study abroad or learn a profession by joining the Order. But we can speak of interaction also with that part of the society that did not wish to follow the monastic life: the Basilians took care of those in need (children of poor families and the elderly). The Romanian Uniate Basilians realized that their interaction with the society had to focus on the soul and intellect of the common people. This is why their mission for the people was to write and print. Their periodicals *The Word of Truth* and the *Calendar of Bixad* were fruit for thought and the source of religious and lay information of the people who inhabited the area.

The results of a life lived in agreement with the principles they followed and preached were visible in the growing number of vocations for monasticism. After less than 10 years since the beginning of the “new” monastic life of Bixad, the monastery could no longer accommodate the Basilians. Bishop Rusu took care that a second community be established in the monastery near Moisei. Later on, Bishop Hossu gave them in administration the monastery of Nicula, thus establishing a third community. Having such a structure and complying with the laws of the Romanian Kingdom, the Greek-Catholic Basilians from Romania received the rank of Province, becoming directly subordinate to the general leadership of the Order in Rome (the general leadership was directly subordinated to the Pope). The Metropolitan Bishop of Blaj granted the Basilians the castle in Obreja, where they established an orphanage, and in Cluj, they received in administration the parishes of Calvaria (Manastur) and Bob (the city centre). They opened a Monastic Seminary where the youth could study and those who desired could follow the monastic life which, living in the seminary, they were able to understand thoroughly. In 1945 the Basilians transferred the orphanage to Turda and dedicated themselves to the care of war orphans.

Most certainly, it was not easy for the monks to support all those structures, but the spirit of their actions helped them in difficult times. One such difficult moment, maybe the most difficult, was the surrender of North Transylvania. But the monks managed to overcome the harsh times, until North Transylvania was given back to Romania and the Romanian Basilian Province restored, with the help of the Holy See and the collaboration of the brothers in Hungary and Transcarpathia.

The situation was different when the communists took the power. One very important aspect needs to be pointed out. We have previously mentioned that the Romanian Uniate

Basilians were wise enough not to trespass their monastic status when interfering with social issues. All their contacts with the society were approached from their position of monks, which they strictly maintained. This approach was mainly respected with regards to politics; they have never been involved in politics, no matter who governed or on what territory they were located. However, the communists regarded them as enemies due to several factors. Mainly they were Greek-Catholic and it is well-known the aversion the communists had towards this denomination (this hatred originated in the relation of the soviet communists with the Greek-Catholics in the Ukrainian Galicia). Secondly, they were directly subordinated to the Pope; consequently they were two times more dangerous. But other direct social factors were also involved. As it was the case of many valuable persons of the Romanian society, the monks cultivated the conscience, dealt with the intellectual instruction; they were involved in the formation of people. And in the opinion of the new system, that was their greatest “sin”. Therefore, they had to be eliminated. The monks noticed that aim of the government, but they continued to take care of the structures which they had established or received in administration till the end. Unfortunately, that was how the repressive authorities managed to built the accusation against some of the leaders of the Romanian Uniate Basilians (father Maxim, the Superior of all Romanian Uniate Basilians at that time) and arrest them in April 1948. The act of October 1st 1948 in Cluj followed and the Greek-Catholic Basilian communities were scattered and some of the monks arrested; those who were free went to their homes or became fugitives, hiding away from the authorities. The Security’s first attempt (October 15 1948) to eliminate the community in the monastery of Bixad was a failure because the large number of faithful who lived in the area opposed to any action of the authorities against the monks, whom they considered their fellows. But the opposition was defeated by the Security that returned for a second raid at the monastery joined by the army (October 19 1948).

The aim of the communists was to shape a “new” man. Since the Basilians were also dealing with the human formation, but in the opposite perspective, the communists were determined to eliminate them.

What followed was a time of persecution and surreptitiousness. The monks and other representatives of the Greek-Catholics suffered a lot. The most active Basilians in the Greek-Catholic resistance were Father Iulian Leon Manu and Father Augustin Silvestru Prundus who

“paid” proportionally with their activism. Other monks were imprisoned; some of them were sentenced, but for others there were only issued decrees by the Security.

Father Manu hid himself in Ploiesti from where he secretly travelled to Cluj and Bucharest, maintaining connections with the monks and the resistance priests. He was in contact with the Office of the Apostolic Nuncio (until July 7 1950, when it was closed) to give and receive information and directions related to the church, but also to receive amounts of money that had to be delivered to the priests and monks of the resistance. For five years the repressive authorities could not trace him (he was arrested on September 23 1953).

Father Prundus was the one who established the contact between Father Manu and the monks. He multiplied and delivered manifestos against the forced conversion of the Greek-Catholics to Orthodoxy. For that he was sentenced. Gaining his freedom, he resumed his resistance activity in parallel with his “official” job in the society. He was arrested again for his clandestine Greek-Catholic activity.

A series of events that occurred in the Soviet block, including Stalin’s death (March 5 1953) determined an ease of the harshness of the repression; that inspired the hope that the Greek-Catholicism could become again legal. Under such circumstances the Basilians started the preparations for the ordination of a new generation of priests (Sabau, Crisan, Micu). Meanwhile, there were some attempts to “force” the government to admit the *de facto* existence of the Romanian Church United with Rome by celebrating the Holy Mass in front of the “Piaristilor” Church which was supported also by the Basilians, mainly Father Prundus. This celebration generated a new wave of arrests among the Greek-Catholics and the Basilians. Although he was four times imprisoned, sentenced to approximately 10 years of jail, Father Prundus outlived the regime. That was not the case of Father Manu who died at Gherla during the second period of detention. Several other Basilians, active in the resistance, were sentenced, but all of them survived (Salagianu, Bal, Avram, Mikle, Sabau, Crisan, Ariesan, Pop, Biris). With the exception of some monks who were not very experienced in the monastic life (we speak of units as number), all the other Basilians preserved their position, not only as Greek-Catholics but also as monks, which comes to prove the quality of their formation and life.

At the beginning of 1962, the international situation generated a change of the Soviet outlook and two years later there were some changes of political vision in Romania, too. With regards to the Greek-Catholic resistance, and not only, there was a stage of tolerance. The priests

and monks were only followed and threatened, without being trialled, sentenced, or tortured. Under such circumstances, the monks tried to become more active, but that was possible only on private religious ground. In the years of tolerance (1964-1989), Father Prundus stood out again. Besides the work of clandestine leader of the Diocese of Cluj-Gherla, he was also the coordinator of the Basilians, mainly of those in Cluj and the surrounding area. The idea of preparing the monks for priesthood, in order to ensure continuity and the spiritual assistance for the Greek-Catholic faithful who did not abandon their faith, was resumed. There were taught clandestine courses of theology and many monks were ordained as priests in the 70's. Rarely and only in the 80's the monks and other Greek-Catholic clandestine priests passed some manifestation somehow publicly and in a greater number (some funerals, for example). The Security was just following them, summoned them for discussions or threats. As the attitude of the authorities was more and more permissive, beginning with the second half of the 80's, a step ahead was the attempt to send young monks to Rome with the declared purpose of lay studies, but with the hidden aim of theological formation. The "head" of the action was, once more, father Prundus. Three Basilians and a young man who was not a monk left at that moment.

During the entire period of surreptitiousness, the monks maintained the connections, as close as they could, with the Greek-Catholic bishops, often visiting them at their forced residence. In Cluj, some of the monks stayed in touch with the young Greek-Catholic intellectuals.

Undoubtedly, the Basilians could not get involved in all the problems that their status would have allowed them to. But maybe the fact that they had always got involved only proportionally with their strengths, without ignoring their monastic life, (as it happened with the branch of Blaj) helped them to develop in a healthy way. The critical component of my study obliges me to point out some domains in which the Basilians were not involved during the analyzed period without judging the fact or the causes. The Uniate Basilians were not present in the diocesan seminaries as teachers or spiritual fathers and we cannot speak of their being involved in any Episcopal Curia in administrative-ecclesiastic services. No bishop proceeding from the monks – Basilian or not – was appointed (the only exception was in Rome where Vasile Cristea, Greek-Catholic priests proceeding from the Order of Augustinians of Assumption was appointed bishop for the Greek-Catholics in the Diaspora in 1960). The Basilians were not involved in the pastoral office of any community in the Diaspora (Attempts were made by Father

Leon Manu, as “old” Basilian the 20’s and Father Miron Moldovan, a reformed Basilian, who emigrated in the USA in 1973; both attempts failed). The first, as it was shown in the paper, returned to the country, but the second continued to live in the USA among the Ukrainian Basilians, returning to Romania after the 1989 changes. Unfortunately, the Romanian Uniate Church was not well represented in the Diaspora, either.

To end in a positive note, we can warmly state that the Romanian Uniate Basilians, in relation with the society from 1918 to 1989 had fully lived in agreement with the spirit of Saint Basil the Great, because they had always tried to be where they were needed, adequate to the times. The most remarkable Romanian Uniate Basilians, in the studied period, were Fathers: Atanasie Maxim, Leon Manu, Gheorghe Marina and Silvestru Prundus. The last three, but other Basilians, too, accepted to be enrolled in the trend of self-reformation of the Romanian Uniate Basilians, trend set by Father Manu. They all passed away, but their spirit is alive through their monastic lifestyle and religious creed both in times of peace and trouble.

Therefore, the Romanian Uniate Basilians belonging to the period studied by the present document were well placed in the descent of the predecessors who reformed themselves and got involved in the social life.

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