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**DOCTORAL THESIS**

**- summary-**

**Radiography of a post-decembrist rectification**  
**Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti**  
**(1990-2020)**

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## **Radiography of a post-decembrist rectification**

### **Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti**

(1990-2020)

**Keywords:** pastoral care, culture, philanthropy, Orthodox Church of Bukovina, Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti, monasticism, confessors, hierarchs, bishop, archbishop, metropolitan, hermitage, monastery, parish, patron, society.

### **Summary**

From the editorial point of view, the work includes four chapters, preceded by an Introduction and each chapter stage after stage falls within the studied geographical framework, within the Romanian Orthodox Church in the county of Bukovina, presenting succinctly and thoroughly the regional situation, accent vectors for a pastoral mission, the Social Philanthropic and Cultural Opponent present in the area through the Historical Monuments, the importance of the area for local, national and world heritage. The paper contains conclusions, photographs and bibliography that is at the end of the research.

### **Introduction**

#### **Purpose**

The choice of this research theme derives from the desire to record the impressive work of the Church carried out between 1990 and 2020 in the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti. The thirty-year activity analyzed in the present thesis in pastoral, cultural and philanthropic aspect captures the Romanian Orthodox Church in a geographically limited space in its capacity as a fighting Church, who preaches and strengthens the hearts of the parishioners in the faith of the Holy Trinity.

The research started from the **hypothesis** that the intensification of the activity of the Romanian Orthodox Church through the reactivation of the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti has dynamized the entire area included in the diocese, leading to increased participation of believers in liturgical worship and parish community.

The work aimed accordingly to outline the general effort made at the level of the Archdiocese after the fall of communism. It was a sacred duty to emphasize the difficult conditions under which hundreds of soul pastors worked enormously for the good of the Church of Jesus Christ, the Savior, for the glory of His Name. We have thus studied the activity of the Bukovinian parents who have worked hard to be with people in these three decades of impressive economic and social changes.

Among them was the figure of Archbishop Pimen Zainea, who was chosen and worthy of remembrance. His hard work has changed dozens of destinies and spurred major changes at the local level. The faithful found in the person of this great hierarch a true father, who is willing to die for the family entrusted to him by the Lord Christ. The love they carried is justified with extra measure. This research pays particular attention to the work undertaken by this providential soul shepherd over three decades, with great tact and firm meekness.

This doctoral research belongs to the domain „Pastoral Theology”, and aims to make an important contribution to knowing the efforts of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the northern area of the country in a difficult period, extensive economic changes that have led to active labour migration abroad and the emergence of private initiatives. In this context, the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti supported communities in great difficulty, trying to contribute, through a pastoral approach, to solving the problems specific to each of them.

### ***The novelty and actuality of the research topic (Originality)***

The research theme also required the presentation of some aspects from the communist regime period. Reactivation of the Diocese of Suceava and Radauti after 1990 occurred at the request of priests and believers.

At the beginning of March 1991, Bishop Pimen of Sucevean receives the title of „Archbishop” of the newly-reactivated diocese and thus begins an assiduous period of shepherding until the death of the hierarch in 2020. Thus, monasteries and parish churches were established and renovated, new asylums, kindergartens and Theological Seminary ,

„Saint Metropolitan Dosoftei” were created. At the same time, houses were erected for the victims and special attention was paid to the sick. The proposal to canonize a large number of saints was accompanied by editorial efforts to highlight the spiritual life preserved over the centuries in this space blessed by God. The visit of King Michael in 1992 brought more visibility to the area so endowed landscape and rich in historical and cultural monuments of national and world interest. Together with Archbishop Pimen Zainea, the monasteries together with the parishes had a permanent work of strengthening the church both from the soul and the wall in the monastic and secular communities.

The large number of tourists, Romanians and foreigners, who have stepped on these lands, have been given special attention by the Archdiocese, through monks and monks, which showed them the hospitality specific to the places. Numerous cultural, social, philanthropic and editorial events have targeted the extremely important group of young people. The food of the churches and monasteries invigorated these lands by their breadth and beauty.

This research represents for me a duty of conscience towards a true shepherd who has marked my life in a way for which I remain grateful.

### ***Framing the research theme in the content horizon of the discipline „ Pastoral Theology”***

Looking back on the thirty years of conjugated activities for the parishioners of these lands, it can be said that the decision of the superior BOR forum to reactivate the Archdiocese was auspicious. The social impact it has had is clearly seen today. This is why this work closely follows the achievements of the Archdiocese, highlighting the overwhelming importance of choosing the right man in the right place.

Discipline „Pastoral Theology” can draw from the experience of the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti pastoral models successfully conducted on the whole diocese, but also at the level of projects. This research thus contributes greatly to the knowledge of the activity of our Church in a geographically delimited area, but which by the intensity of the efforts exceeds it, positively influencing the lives of thousands of people, which directly and indirectly benefited from them.



### ***Basic objectives of the doctoral thesis***

**The general objective** is to outline an overview of the pastoral efforts made assiduously between 1990 and 2020 in the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti under the leadership of Archbishop Pimen Zainea.

**The specific objectives** of this research are:

- the identification of the qualities of Archbishop Pimen Zainea in the leadership of the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti;
- Releving the connection between the social-philanthropic activities and the intensity of the spiritual life in the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti;
- The impact of cultural-religious activities on the population of this diocese is evidenced;
- Releving the inter-confessional links established in the three decades in the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti.

### ***The stage of this research***

The need for work focusing on the pastoral effort put into practice since the Archdiocese's reactivation in 1991 is obvious. The analysis of the post-communist period is imperative because it represents a stage of extensive political, economic and social changes.

The small number of bibliographic sources from which the activity of the Archdiocese could be extracted in these thirty years requires research that presents in detail the work undertaken by a large number of priests, but also laymen under the obedience of Archbishop Pimen Zainea. At this time there is no doctoral research focusing on the topic addressed in this paper. As a result, there is a place not covered by the research of the last three decades. Since the Hierarch who led the Archdiocese passed to the Lord in 2020, this research comes to shed light on the efforts of an entire ecclesiastical institutional apparatus led by Archbishop Pimen with pastoral discernment. The paper therefore opens up a series of possible researches regarding the thirty-year period analyzed.

### ***Relevance***

This paper focused on the detailed study of the magazines and periodicals that presented the activity of the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti. Identifying accessible bibliographic sources, providing relevant material, was a great effort because usually a doctoral thesis has an important material contained in already published books. This is not the case because the research is singular.

The paper has imposed a greater attention in extracting information that is relevant in this endeavour. The large number of information, due to the intense activity of the diocese, also determined the choice of the most relevant content. That is why I have often found myself in a position to choose and to include in detail only the aspects that could best shape the personality of the Hierarch, he said, but also the characteristics of this diocese located in an area full of history and culture.

### ***Importance of research***

The pastoral model provided by the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti in these three decades must be replicated. One can see how one man can change not only the destiny of a few, but of a whole land and, no doubt, even of the country. „Pastoral theology” here easily finds relevant information and a huge practice of obeying the divine commandments.

This research is a beginning of the journey in the series of books that will tell the world about the inner power of faith in God, as it is preached in the Romanian Orthodox Church. Because architectural monuments and tourist attractions from all corners of Bukovina were the attraction of Romanian and foreign tourists, the work with young people and foreigners was particularly successful through cultural, social, and cultural events, well thought out and carefully organized philanthropic and editorial.

### ***Conclusions:***

The reactivation of the Archdiocese allowed the reporting of the servants of the altars of this land to a single hierarch, who also responded to their good. Thus, the Archdiocese has worked intensively for all thirty years, putting into practice countless initiatives and projects

through close collaboration between Archbishop Pimen, with his clergy and pastors. In this way, all the work carried out in the area has acquired a dynamic character, which would not have been manifested if the decision was not taken to reactivate this diocese, with a skilled leader at its helm.

The entire activity of the archdiocese was coordinated taking into account these initial practices. The accumulated resources and the created development levers allowed for very rapid intervention in urgent cases, such as those of the victims. As I tried to highlight in the paper, the Archdiocese showed a continuous concern for those in difficult situations, from children to the elderly.

The Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti succeeded, with Archbishop Pimen at the helm, to attract the population to the consolidation and foundation of churches. Thus, he intensified the participation in church services of a large number of Orthodox Christians who did not used to go to church. The missionary aspect of the pastoral activity of Archbishop Pimen was fulfilled with maximum diligence, sometimes beyond ordinary human powers. This Hierarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church offered advice to all who needed it. At the same time, he gave long hours of audiences, confessing and sharing all who wanted.

The economic administration of the Archdiocese was not an easy thing, given that the standard of living in many communities is very low.

The pastoral activity of the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti in the thirty years analyzed in this research was characterized by the coherence of the actions. The social-philanthropic side could not have been so strongly stimulated if it was not supported simultaneously by other initiatives in other areas. The editorial activity that materialized in the publication of hundreds of volumes and the appearance of several local publications contributed from the shadows, if so, to the success of other activities, how were the social-philanthropic plans. Thus, the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti was present among the people, confirming its permanent support in any economic and social conditions.

In the parishes that are common centers, houses were built for children and old people with a small number of residents because they were easier to maintain than a home with many places. This model of help houses for vulnerable people with a small number of beneficiaries can be taken as an example in any parish community in the country. They provide permanent support to people who are hopeless and deprived of the love of close friends.

Archbishop Pimen was able to put into practice a pastoral activity similar to St. Basil the Great, who made unceasing efforts to attract the community of Christians in support of the most disadvantaged people. It is visible that the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti has become in thirty years a diocese focused on the good of all. The pastors of souls thus learned from Archbishop Pimen that the Kingdom of Heaven is won only by lovingly serving those younger brothers of Savior Jesus Christ (Matthew 25:31-46).

The reactivation of the Archdiocese of Suceava and Radauti after the fall of communism was undoubtedly a strategic decision of the Synod of our Church. The election of Archbishop Pimen Zanea was indeed providential, giving the area the Hierarch he needed so that the spiritual life would increase in intensity to the glory of God.

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